



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>













A  
**REVIEW**  
OF THE  
GENERAL AND PARTICULAR CAUSES  
WHICH HAVE PRODUCED THE LATE  
*DISORDERS AND DIVISIONS*  
IN THE  
YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,  
HELD IN PHILADELPHIA:  
WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON THE STATE OF THE  
**PRIMITIVE CHURCHES,**  
THEIR GRADUAL DECLENSION, AND SUBSEQUENT  
ADVANCEMENT IN REFORMATION, TO THE RISE OF THE  
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.



---

BY JAMES COCKBURN.

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY PHILIP PRICE, JR., AND SOLD  
BY JOHN TOWNSEND, NO. 346 MARKET STREET.

1829. *cl*



**EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, to wit:**

\*\*\*\*\* BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the Fifth day  
\* L. S. \* of February, in the fifty third year of the Independ-  
\*\*\*\*\* dence of the United States of America, A. D. 1829,  
JAMES COCKBURN, of the said District, hath deposited in this  
Office the Title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Au-  
thor, in the words following, to wit:

“ A Review of the General and Particular causes which have  
produced the late Disorders and Divisions in the Yearly Meet-  
ing of Friends, held in Philadelphia, with Introductory Remarks  
on the State of the Primitive Churches, their gradual Declen-  
sion, and subsequent Advancement in Reformation, to the rise  
of the society of Friends, By JAMES COCKBURN.”

In conformity to the Act of Congress of the United States,  
intituled, “ An Act for the encouragement of learning, by secur-  
ing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and  
proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.”  
And also to the Act, entitled, “ An Act supplementary to an  
Act, entitled ‘ An Act for the encouragement of learning, by  
securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors  
and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein men-  
tioned,’ and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of design-  
ing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

D. CALDWELL, *Clerk of the*  
*Eastern District of Pennsylvania.*

W. W. B.  
L. S.  
A. S.

## PREFACE.

---

The late disorders that have taken place within the limits of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia, deeply affected the writer of this Review. In early life he was convinced of the fundamental principle professed by Friends, previous to much knowledge respecting the practical testimonies of the society. Being born in Scotland he was educated in the doctrines of the established church of that country. Arriving in Philadelphia in the Spring of 1801, his former impressions had prepared him readily to unite with the practical habits of Friends, and to join in christian communion with them. For twenty-five years he has taken a feeling interest in the affairs of the society, and could not remain indifferent to the progress of those measures and proceedings, the development of which has produced so much painful exercise and trial to Friends of this Yearly Meeting.

Had the unpleasant occurrences which have taken place, remained as a private or partial misunderstanding in the form of a domestic difference, it would have been improper and unnecessary, to present the circumstances to public attention. The orthodox brethren, however, have dismissed all delicacy on this subject by a public "Declaration,"\* in which they assign as the cause of their disunion from the principal part of

\* Declaration, &c. adopted by the orthodox Yearly Meeting in Fourth month, 1828.

this Yearly Meeting, "an open denial of the fundamental doctrines of the christian religion, as they are laid down by our blessed Redeemer and his apostles, in the Holy Scriptures." Having made this grievous charge, they further declare, "we cannot unite with them in church fellowship, nor own them to be of our communion."

The writer is aware that a charge does not constitute either fact or guilt in relation to the accused; but as the orthodox Declaration embracing the charge quoted, appears to be of an imposing and deceptive character, and as great pains have been taken to introduce it to the particular attention of other religious professors, with a design to produce an impression that the greater part of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia have changed their religious views, it seems due to truth, and to the christian community, as well as to the society of Friends, to exhibit a correct outline of transactions as they took place.

In feeling the weight of religious obligation to exhibit a review of those occurrences which fell under the particular notice of the writer, (and to such the work is principally confined,) his mind was drawn into tender sympathy with innocent and upright Friends who have been imposed upon by specious representations, and constructed charges, destitute of solid foundation, tending to retain them in bondage to that mistrust and indecision of mind which greatly interrupts their usefulness and comfort.

Although the writer could not sacrifice truth to the respect which he wishes to cherish towards the orthodox brethren, he has endeavoured to avoid personal reflection, and has not mentioned even all the names of those which have already been made public in connexion with their agency in particular cases. The object has not been to criminate and censure individuals but to exhibit the general causes of declension in the society of Friends, and to show that the particular causes of the late dis-

orders, have been produced by the same thirst of power which acting on the mind of man, has proved in every age a source of disorder both in religious and civil society. Animated with a fervent desire to rest on the basis of correct principles, and appreciate the agency of christian virtue, the writer turned his attention from immediate exciting causes, and looked back to the origin and progress, the declension and partial reformations of the christian churches. He viewed with renewed interest the rise and increase of the society of Friends, and in discerning the efficacy of their peculiar principle, and the usefulness of its practical influence, he was not insensible to the manifestation and progress of those general causes of declension in this society which have appeared in all others whose history has been developed, and which, when not timely counteracted, have uniformly produced the same results.

As the "tree is known by its fruit," so every class of actions bears evidence of the spirit which produceth them. The disinterested reader of this Review will discriminate, according to his own judgment, and the nature of the evidence connected with the record of circumstantial facts. It is hoped the class of Friends called orthodox, in reviewing an outline of their proceedings will closely examine the spring of their actions, as well as the temper and disposition which have carried them into effect, and cease to increase the injury they have inflicted on the society by traducing and oppressing their brethen. It is moreover earnestly recommended to Friends, who may have been tried and afflicted by the desolations which a selfish spirit has brought upon the society, to recur to the sacred enclosure, limited and defended by truth, where the weary rest at noon, and where the spring of divine consolation and christian support will be experienced, uniting in an increasing qualification to sustain the testimonies of practical righteousness.

The term orthodox, as applied in this work to that class of Friends whose recent proceedings have caused so much diffi-

sulty in the society on this continent, is used only to distinguish the party, and in no respect as a concession that the individuals composing it are more correct in their principles or practice, than the great majority of Friends whom they have charged as being unsound, and attempted to disown. This attempt, however, has only resulted in their own exclusion from the body, as Friends continue in the exercise of the customary relations of the society, and in the maintenance of those principles which they have always professed as a people. The application of the term orthodox to a party in the society of Friends, appears to have arisen from the similarity of their assumptions and measures with those of the various sects who, at different periods of the church, have laid claim to this distinction, and on this ground have proscribed and persecuted others who have differed from them in opinion.

It is proper to state that the author alone is answerable for the sentiments and views exhibited in the progress of this review. They are the fruits of a feeling conviction made in his own mind, and are submitted to public attention, as a tribute to the support of those principles of civil and religious liberty which have influenced him through life, and which he hopes to cherish to its close.

*Philadelphia, 2d Mo. 6th, 1829.*

## CONTENTS.

---

	Page.
<b>INTRODUCTION.</b>	
<b>Explication of Practical Christian Principles.</b>	1
<b>CHAPTER I.</b>	
<b>State of the Primitive Churches, and their Declension from Original Purity into Ecclesiastical Establishments.</b>	5
<b>CHAPTER II.</b>	
<b>Origin of the Orthodox Creed, and gradual advancement of the Protestant Reformation.</b>	13
<b>CHAPTER III.</b>	
<b>Rise of the society of Friends, their peculiar principles leading unto peculiar Testimonies.</b>	21
<b>CHAPTER IV.</b>	
<b>The Christian Discipline of Friends gradually established, and the usefulness of the Society exhibited.</b>	31
<b>CHAPTER V.</b>	
<b>Review of the general causes of Declension in the society of Friends, the Settlement of the society in Pennsylvania, and subsequent Declension.</b>	39
<b>CHAPTER VI.</b>	
<b>Causes of the late disorders in the society of Friends, within the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia.</b>	53
<b>CHAPTER VII.</b>	
<b>Origin and duties of Elders in the society of Friends—Orthodox party formed, and endeavour to introduce a Creed into the society.</b>	81
<b>CHAPTER VIII.</b>	
<b>Orthodox party pursuing measures to separate themselves from the society of Friends—Uncommon occurrences in the Western Meeting.</b>	91

	Page.
<b>CHAPTER IX.</b>	
<b>Causes of Division in Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting.</b>	109
<b>CHAPTER X.</b>	
<b>Review of disciplinary principle of Friends, with remarks on the alleged laying down of Green street Monthly Meeting by Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting.</b>	133
<b>CHAPTER XI.</b>	
<b>Inconsistent proceedings in the Meeting for Sufferings.</b>	169
<b>CHAPTER XII.</b>	
<b>Dividing causes in the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia, in the Fourth month, 1827.</b>	187
<b>CHAPTER XIII.</b>	
<b>Occurrences in connexion with the general meeting of Friends held by adjournments, at Green street Meeting-house, in the city of Philadelphia, on the Fourth and Fifth days of the Sixth month, 1827, pursuant to an adjournment on the 21st of Fourth month previous.</b>	206
<b>CHAPTER XIV.</b>	
<b>Extra session of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, held in Philadelphia, in the 10th month, 1827, according to the recommendation of the General Conference held on the 4th and 5th of the Sixth month.</b>	222
<b>CHAPTER XV.</b>	
<b>Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia in the 4th month, 1828.</b>	228
<b>CHAPTER XVI.</b>	
<b>Cases resulting from the re-organization of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia.</b>	250
<b>CHAPTER XVII.</b>	
<b>Conclusion—Embracing a Condensed Summary of the whole.</b>	271

## INTRODUCTION.

### EXPLICATION OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES.

The great and leading object of the Gospel or New Testament dispensation, is to preserve man in or restore him to that state, in which he was created, and in which the energies of his being may be brought into proper action, and approximate to the complete development of that capacity wherein true and lasting good is enjoyed. Hence, spiritual regeneration *of heart* was uniformly inculcated, and particularly insisted upon by Jesus Christ; and all who have experienced restoration from the dominion of selfish nature, and have been brought into the enjoyment of goodness and truth, have borne testimony to the redeeming power of the spirit of Christ. Nothing short of the power and virtue of the Divine spirit, can change the heart of man, fallen under the influence and direction of the sensual nature. As is the fountain, so will be the stream. If the intellectual powers of the human mind be

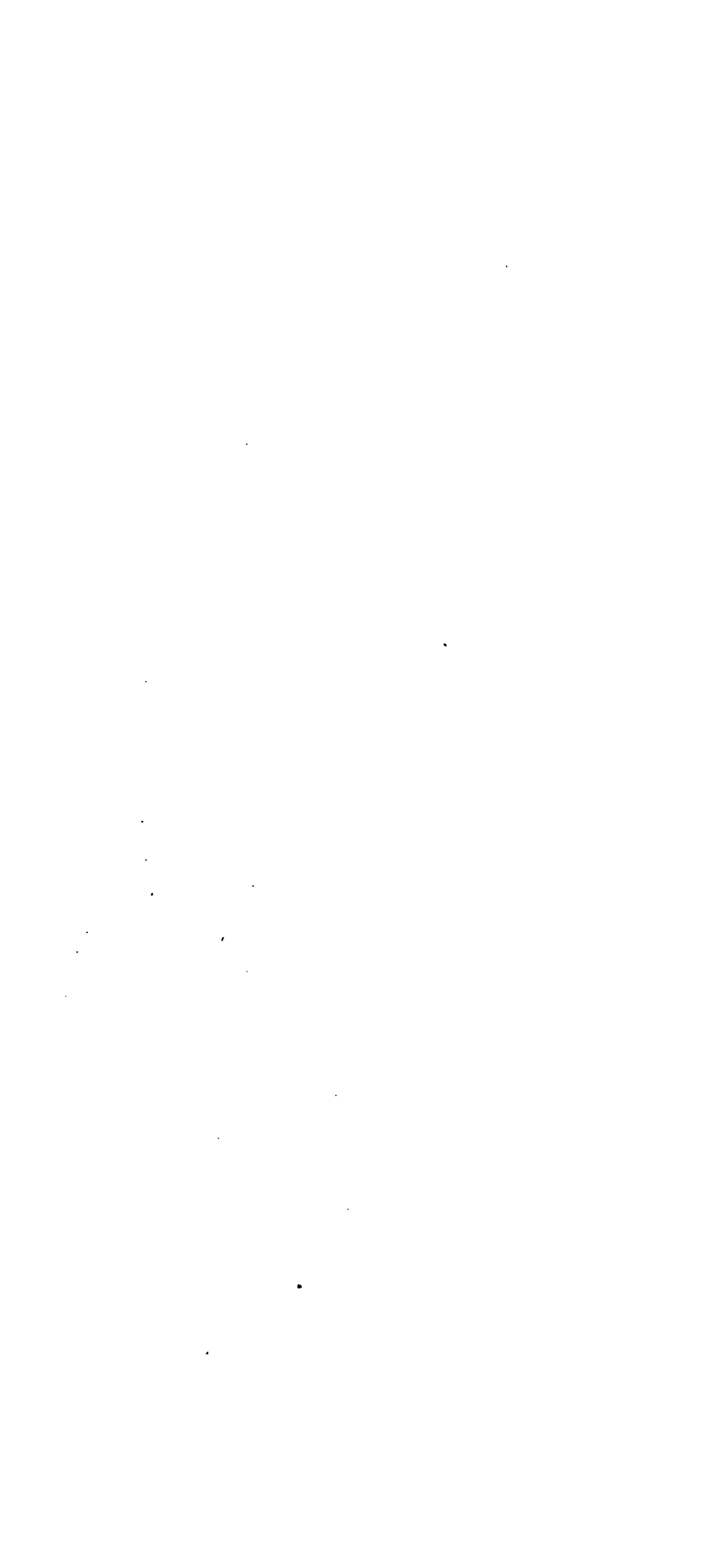


effectually drawn under the controul of the sensual nature, the desires, pursuits, and actions will be of the same kind. But if the mind yields to the reception and operation of redeeming power and virtue, the gospel spirit will produce gospel fruits. The pure morality of the gospel spirit, which is so congenial with the best interests and highest enjoyment of humanity, flows as the native stream from regeneration of heart, or the restoration of the human mind under the practical influence and direction of the Divine spirit.

Doing to others as we would they should do unto us, is the golden rule of Christian morality. This rule is deeply grounded in the nature of things, forever resting on the principle of immutable justice. But its foundation is not more permanent, than the superstructure in effect is beautiful and beneficial. Had this rule uniformly governed men in their actions one to another, how much crime and unhappiness might have been prevented in every age of the world! How greatly might the means of comfort and enjoyment have been diffused throughout every class of men in their different allotments in life.

In addition to the principle of operative justice, or pure practical morality, the New Testament law-giver, enjoined and exemplified a full display of that righteousness which is congenial

with the proper development of the human character, unfolding itself under those benign influences which flow from the fountain of truth. He distinctly enjoined the extension of love to enemies, and good will to those who might hate or persecute us; or in other words, showed the possibility of the human mind being so intimately united with the fountain of goodness and truth, as not to be moved from it by any external occurrence; but through all trials, bringing forth the native fruits of the Divine Spirit—peace, love, and good will to all men, however they might deviate from truth and justice. This injunction was fulfilled by many of the followers of Jesus Christ, both in primitive and succeeding times; who for a good conscience, and the testimony of Jesus, valued not their natural lives, but passively submitted to the cruelty of their persecutors.



## CHAPTER I.

### STATE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES AND THEIR DECLENSION FROM ORIGINAL PURITY, INTO ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENTS.

The persecutions raised against Jesus Christ and his immediate followers, became the visible means of distributing the first promulgators of the outward manifestation of Christ among the surrounding nations.

Their labours of love being accompanied with the practical evidences of the Divine spirit, numerous churches became established in the simplicity and purity of truth—ardent love to God, and feeling sympathetic affection to one another, purified by the spirit of true devotion, became the basis and bond of the primitive church's union. They practically experienced the fulfilment of the declaration of Jesus Christ: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." While the primitive churches abode in the enjoyment of their first love, there does not appear to have been any ne-

cessity for outward written confessions of belief or faith. It does not appear that Jesus Christ laid upon his followers any outward formula of external doctrines for their guidance or observance; but distinctly assured them, that the spirit of truth in their own minds would lead them into all truth necessary for them.—In conformity with this assurance, the apostles, when met to deliberate concerning the Gentile believers,\* declared it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost and them, to lay no other burthen upon their Gentile brethren, than to abstain from those immoralities and idolatrous customs, which were inconsistent with the purity of Christian worship and practice. Neither Christ nor the Apostles thought it expedient to condense into a *written form*, any systematic theory of the gospel, nor to prescribe any absolute form of church government. What is called the Apostles' Creed, is alleged by ecclesiastical historians† not to have been written for some centuries after the Apostolic age; and that there is reason to believe it was not written all at once, but according to the springing up in the church, from time to time, of what was supposed to be heresy. The fact is, the church being composed of many members, a gradual unfolding

\* Acts xv. 29.

† Mosheim, vol. i. p. 33 & 54.

of truth was to be experienced in the minds of the faithful, opening their views to the adoption and application of such measures, as their wants and exigencies might require. This was evidently the testimony of Jesus, when he declared that they that did the will of his Father in heaven, should know of the doctrine, whether it was true, by the practical operation of Truth enlightening their minds. And again, he testified to his followers, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

From these testimonies, as well as from the practice of the apostles and primitive church, we may perceive, that both individual members and the collective church, were to be under the influence, direction, and government of the spirit of Christ. And for the encouragement of dedicated faithfulness, it was promised, "where two or three are met together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them." And again, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Hence, the members of the true church in every age, were to turn their principal attention, and place their chief dependence upon the openings, leading, and guidance of the spirit of Christ, both in their private walking, and in their relations with one another, in maintaining that

order and consistency, into which the truth ever will lead its followers. Entire uniformity in every idea and opinion, does not appear essential to the advancement of different individuals, in the saving knowledge and experimental benefits of the truth. Neither does entire uniformity in church government, seem essential for the right ordering of different religious communities or churches, if the operation of best wisdom be rightly applied to their respective situations and circumstances. The order and proceedings of the primitive churches, were such as the spirit of truth led its followers into. They were at first single congregations\* of Christians, united in the feeling of Christian love and mutual enjoyment, instructing and strengthening one another in the path of virtue and piety. Whatever arrangement their particular situations might require, in instructing the ignorant, visiting the sick, and supplying the necessities of the poor, the members of each community were upon the most perfect equality, each administering the necessary care to its own concerns. Thus practically realizing the declaration, "One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Until the middle of the second century, the practical illustration of Christian principle and

\* Mosheim, p. 45, vol. i.

piety remained in effective operation, when the Grecian churches\* in conformity with their political customs, began to associate or form all the congregations of a province, into one ecclesiastical body—other provinces imitated the example of forming councils or synods, thus breaking up the beautiful equality into which the gospel had led, and eventually laying a foundation for raising the whole structure of ecclesiastical distinction and domination, which has proved so injurious to the cause of Christ, and the general interests of mankind.

These councils or synods, although composed of Ministers or Bishops as representatives from the several congregations or churches, by degrees assumed exclusive power, until they became independent of the people; turning their influence into dominion, and their counsel into laws, and in process of time, they openly asserted that Christ had empowered them to prescribe to his people, authoratative rules of faith and manners, as well as to demand of right an exclusive maintainance. †

Such practical deviations from the simplicity and purity of the gospel, could not fail to alienate

\* Mosheim, page 87, vol. i.

† Mosheim, page 88, vol. i.



the minds of Christian professors, from the spring of true piety and virtue, and open a door to those errors and schisms, which spread over the Christian churches.—As the Bishops and other beneficiaries of the church rose to independence, and obtained the means of worldly aggrandizement, they imbibed the wisdom and policy of the world, and became involved in those pursuits which led to preferment and individual promotion.

The Bishops having raised themselves as a distinct order above the people, soon violated the equality of one another, and claimed those degrees of precedency which are conformable to the desires of worldly ambition. New orders of inferior clergy were introduced by degrees into the service of the church, and many customs intermixed with the forms of religious worship, which greatly tended to strengthen the hands of those engaged in making a gain or merchandize of the concerns of religious society. The Bishops in many places assumed a princely splendour and authority, where ever they could obtain the means from the churches under their care. The example of the Bishops was ambitiously imitated by the inferior orders of clergy, who appear to have much neglected the duties of the stations they laid claim to, and abandoned themselves to

the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life.\* Thus the simplicity and purity of the Christian church was by degrees departed from, and an establishment of Political Christianity gradually raised by human policy and power, which for ages darkened with its shade the rising emotions of virtue in the human mind.

\* Mosheim, page 136, vol. i.



## CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN OF THE ORTHODOX CREED, AND GRADUAL  
ADVANCEMENT OF THE PROTESTANT REFOR-  
MATION.

In the progress of individual aggrandizement and conflicting interests for the attainment of power, the rulers of the church became involved in contentions and divisions respecting opinions and doctrines, which greatly disturbed the public repose, while their only object was to promote private interest, by the establishment of particular dogmas.—To allay these feuds and contentions, and perhaps, with political views, to consolidate his own power through the agency of the church, Constantine the Roman Emperor convened a general Council of Bishops at Nice, in the year 325\* whose deliberations on the existing controversies in the church, resulted in the formation of what has been called the Nicæan or Athanasian Creed. This Creed which sprung from contention, appearing to be gratifying to the greater

\* Mosheim, p. 217, vol. i.

number of church rulers and who of consequence had the most influence and power over the people, was sanctioned by the Emperor, and enforced by law; but was afterwards annulled, and opposite views countenanced and supported, both by Constantine and his successors. Both the supporters and opposers of this creed, appear to have acted on the principle of coercion, enforcing by pains and penalties their prevailing views. After much contention and persecution on both sides, this famous creed received the finishing touch, by a second council of one hundred and fifty Bishops, met in Constantinople under the auspices of the Emperor Theodosius, in the year 381\*—which was thenceforward taken and deemed to be orthodox—whatever may be the proper meaning of the term *orthodoxy*, in the case before us, it plainly exhibits *a system of religious opinions, supported and imposed on others by power*. The practical operation of the spirit of orthodoxy, has afforded unequivocal proofs of the correctness of this definition. It seems hardly possible to estimate the quantity of human comfort and human life, that this spirit of orthodoxy has destroyed in the world, through the ages that are past. The humane mind sickens at a review of the bloody spectacle produced by

\* Mosheim, p. 224, vol. i.

the most cruel malignity of which the heart of man is capable, under the guise of religious zeal. Whatever may be the merits or pretensions of this orthodox creed, we are sure it has no necessary connexion with the gospel of Christ, which breathes "peace on earth and goodwill to men," leaving all, as it respects private judgment, in the enjoyment of their own feelings, answerable to Him only who sees in "secret, and who will reward openly." The formation of any creed, abstractedly considered, may be harmless; but its substitution in the place of the gospel, or its imposition on others who have the same unalienable right to judge for themselves, as those who made it, appears to be impious and unjust.—Impious, in setting up an image of human conception, to limit the unfoldings of the Divine spirit; unjust, in violating every obligation, arising from the equality of our common nature. The exhibition of a creed as a popular centre of voluntary union in particular societies, may be admissible, on the ground of human policy; but it has no countenance or foundation in the gospel, which consists "not in word only but in power."

That there were many good and piously disposed men, both in the councils of Nice and Constantinople, who framed and sanctioned this orthodox creed, will readily be admitted by every

liberal mind; but it is plain that the active and prevailing part, took a direction under the influence of selfish views, in conformity with human policy. The superstructure of political Christianity, raised on the basis of this orthodox creed, during what has not inaptly been called the dark ages, appears to have had the most appalling and paralyzing effects on the interests of human society—all the energies of the human mind seem to have been absorbed in the vortex of a gloomy superstition, as weak and unavailing to man, as the controllers of this potent engine were despotic and cruel.—But although the interests of humanity were widely poured out, as a continued libation to the superstition of the mixed despotism of church and state, there was always a remnant of worshippers of the true God in every age, scattered up and down, whose example tended to preserve some sense of true piety and virtue in their different vicinities.

The true church for many ages appears to have been in the wilderness, or hid from public view, by the gaudy pageantry and ostentatious exhibition of human contrivances, which attracted and absorbed the devotional powers of the mind of man—many who might bow as in the house of *Rimmon*, were nevertheless upright and sincere in heart, although the understanding

might be veiled by the superstitions which surrounded them. The obscuring veil of human tradition, could not wholly prevent the secret operations of spiritual life in the mind of man.— Numerous individuals and whole societies were often raised up to bear, more or less, clear testimonies to the spiritual virtues of Divine truth.— The Beggards, Lollards, Waldenses, and other descriptions of communities through many dark ages, bore in their practice a light of truth, which all the violence of their persecutors could not extinguish. This light continued to shine, until a considerable reformation was produced in the 15th and 16th centuries, through the instrumentality of Luther, Zuingle, Calvin, Wickliff, and Knox, who greatly contributed to break the yoke of Papal supremacy; and as Pioneers, opened the way for the advancement of purer views and a more correct practice of gospel truth. The Protestant and Reformed churches, by degrees excited general attention, and awakened the human mind to deep consideration, in regard to the propriety of existing religious ceremonies and practices. The dead weight of superstitious oppression was felt as a grievous encumbrance, and new modifications of religious ceremony took place in different parts, according as the light of reformation progressed. As the fascinating, de-



ceptive, and mysterious exhibition of idolatrous worship, came to be superceded by simpler and more rational forms, the public mind began to question the authority of tradition; and amidst the variety of conflicting opinions, by degrees the light of truth came to be more fully elicited and generally understood, both in regard to Christian principle and practice. In looking through the gloomy vista of the dark ages, in which so many generations of men groped their way, embosomed in the clouds of bewildering superstition, the philanthropic mind, hails with complacent joy the rising dawn of the light of reformation, shedding its radiance on the interests of man; but must perceive with deep regret the light of truth too often interrupted by some of the reformers rebuilding again those things that were destroyed. New modifications of external ceremony and controversial speculations respecting doctrinal views, appear to have embraced too much of the attention of the Reformed churches, and retarded the progress of the Gospel spirit, which alone produces Christian charity and practical piety. Reformation in several National churches produced a change in the public mind respecting the externals of religion, without producing the desirable effects of the Divine spirit, charity, love and affectionate regard for one an-

other. The strenuous reformers of one church, disputed and contended with, and even persecuted those of other churches; plainly evincing that their kingdom was too much of this world—afraid or ashamed to own the unfoldings of the spirit of truth in their own minds, the first reformers sought a foundation and a defence in the opinions of the ancient Fathers, placing confidence in the interpretations of scripture by those Fathers,\* without coming to the evidences of the spirit of genuine reformation in themselves, or even trusting to the express letter of scripture for their rule, without the glosses of antiquity, which had no proper bearing on the question of reformation in modern times. Hence, the great variety of conflicting opinions, which marked the progress of the Reformed churches, and so much disturbed the public mind. Opinions springing from the opinions of others, became a fruitful source of controversy, and diverted the mind from a proper inquiry into the origin, or true ground of religious principle and its abuse. All the controversy of learned churchmen for several ages, only produced an alteration in the exterior appearance of religious ceremony, and rebuilt their particular churches on the basis of the ancient orthodox creed. The

\* Hurd on the Prophecies, Sermon 12th, page 350.

Reformed National churches, settling again on the old foundation, and adhering to the old root of orthodoxy, it is not surprising that the same superstructure of political Christianity, composed of other objects and forms should be raised, and the same fruits of penal coercion brought forth, to bear upon those they denominated non-conformists. A gradation in the development and fulfilment of events, is perhaps best adapted to the nature of man, and the interest of human society. In the unfoldings of an Allwise Providence, the general reformation from the gross darkness of ecclesiastical superstition was a great object attained. The spirit of inquiry was excited, and light became gradually diffused on the religious and moral state of man. However, the political and ecclesiastical powers of the earth combined to establish the channels of their own interest, and consolidate their power over the rights of the people, the light of reformation was spread too wide, and risen too high, ever to become wholly extinguished. If it was repressed in one nation or district, it arose with more brightness and lustre in some other nation or district, where Divine Providence opened a way for it.

### CHAPTER III.

#### RISE OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, THEIR PECULIAR PRINCIPLES LEADING UNTO PECULIAR TESTIMONIES.

Among the numerous testimony-bearers to what they believed to be the light of truth, witnessing against the received errors of the reformation, the religious society of Friends took its rise, and soon came to be an interesting portion of the Christian community. This society arose at a period, when church and state were greatly agitated, by the speculations of different religious professors, and by the intrigues of different political parties. Its organization and establishment, was through manifold trials and much suffering on the part of those prepared to become instrumental in concentrating the light of truth, so as to produce the practical effects of its virtue and power. The combined operations of church and state could not repress the arising and consolidation of the society of Friends. The devices brought into action, and the penalties inflicted

upon this people, greatly tended to bring into view, the effective illustration of that spiritual principle, which the society believes every human mind is endowed with, as a medium whereby the saving unction and virtue of the gospel may be experienced. The recognition of this spiritual principle, as a leader and guide in spiritual things, became a rallying point to many minds sorely perplexed and tossed to and fro, upon the current of the floating opinions of the age. Individuals having come to the experience of a spiritual principle opening their understanding, enlightening their path, and drawing their minds into a sensible union with the immutable and inexhaustible fountain of good, they became associated and united together in the participation of heavenly virtue, and in the enjoyment of a spiritual bond of union and Christian fellowship which could not be broken—meetings were gathered and established upon the basis of primitive essential principle, and in the absence of creaturely activity and external ceremony, spiritual worship in its native operation and powerful effects, came to be known.

As the human mind comes to cease from its own irregular workings, and emptied of those cogitations produced by visible objects, it recurs in some degree to its pristine state of adaptation,

as a recipient for spiritual impressions, congenial with its unadulterated nature, and convertible into spiritual nourishment and Christian strength. From this source, through dedicated minds, emanated the different peculiar testimonies which the religious society of Friends embraced as a people, and maintained in practice, even under grievous persecution. The testimonies into which the exercise of true spiritual worship led, were consistent with themselves, and reached the pure witness for truth in many minds, who were strangers to the spirituality of religious principle. The verbal and practical testimonies of individuals redeemed from the corruptions of selfish nature by the virtue of divine grace, were gladly received by many in the love of truth; and thus in the ordering of Divine Wisdom the society of Friends was as an example to the nations, gathered out of all other Christian denominations into the capacity of a visible church.

The decisive testimonies borne by the society of Friends against the corruptions of Christianity, excited great animadversion and opposition in the minds of many, in almost all the existing denominations of Christian professors. However these denominations differed from one another, they appear to have united in a general opposition to Friends. The Quaker principle was de-

nounced as embracing a renunciation of Christianity, and, under the pretence of greater degrees of spiritual light, undervaluing the Holy Scriptures, denying the Lord that bought them, and in consequence of their supposed infidel views, the society was deemed unworthy of either Christian communion or civil protection.\* This denunciation was not in words only, but was embraced and acted upon by high religious professors, in effective stations both in church and state. All the energies of that spirit of undue domination, which seeks to controul both the minds and bodies of men, appear to have been aroused at the prospect of the human mind becoming released from those fetters, which scholastic divinity for ages had been rivetting.

However charity may be disposed to cover with its mantle the aberrations of erring humanity, it is a homage due to immutable truth, to acknowledge the liability of the human mind to misapply the means of good so as to produce evil. The misapplication of religious principle and feeling, has proved a cause of more calamity to the human family, than all other causes combined. The ancient, abstruse and

\* See Address of the General Court of Boston, to King Charles 2d, on his restoration.—HUTCHINSON'S HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Complicated theology of the schoolmen appears to have been founded on mystery, cemented by tradition and ceremonial superstition, and enforced by civil penalties. However the reformation may have softened some of the features of this picture, the native liniments remained virtually and substantially the same. The political establishment of the national reformed churches, embracing a forced maintainance for the clergy, appears to have prevented them from coming fully to the light of the gospel day, or the full realization of gospel principle and practice. The reformed hierarchy, was willing to borrow from Popish supremacy the succession of the ministry, with the corresponding entail of "the loaves and fishes."

The society of Friends was originally formed of individuals who had come to the experimental knowledge of gospel truth, and could not subject principle to interest, nor comply with the demands of church rates, nor in any way countenance or support a hireling ministry. Hence the animosity of the clergy to this people, and their constant endeavours to unchristianize them, and render them odious in the eyes of the world. Friends believed they were called to bear verbal and practical testimony to the simplicity, purity, and universality of the gospel dispensation. They claimed nothing more nor less, than the



liberty of the truth as it is in Jesus. Without calling in question the written scriptures, they embraced the spirituality of the gospel dispensation, and believed every individual had a measure of the divine spirit to preserve him from evil or redeem him from it. This claim subjected the society, in the eyes of the hireling clergy, to the charge of enthusiasm and fanaticism, and many other opprobrious epithets. The reason is obvious: the universal operation of the efficient principle of divine grace in the mind of man, to which they bore testimony, takes the commodity of gospel traffic out of the hands of the clergy. It places them on a level with other men, and dries up the source of their power and interest. Hence the tocsin of alarm, "the church is in danger," has constantly been sounded, when individuals or communities have let go their leading strings of tradition, and inquired or judged for themselves respecting the obligations of religious duty.

Truth is immutable, universal in its nature, and will shed its influence and benefits on all who come under its operation. The spiritual ministration of the gospel dispensation is, in divine wisdom, every way adapted to the capacity and wants of man. So far is the leading and distinguishing principle of the religious society of

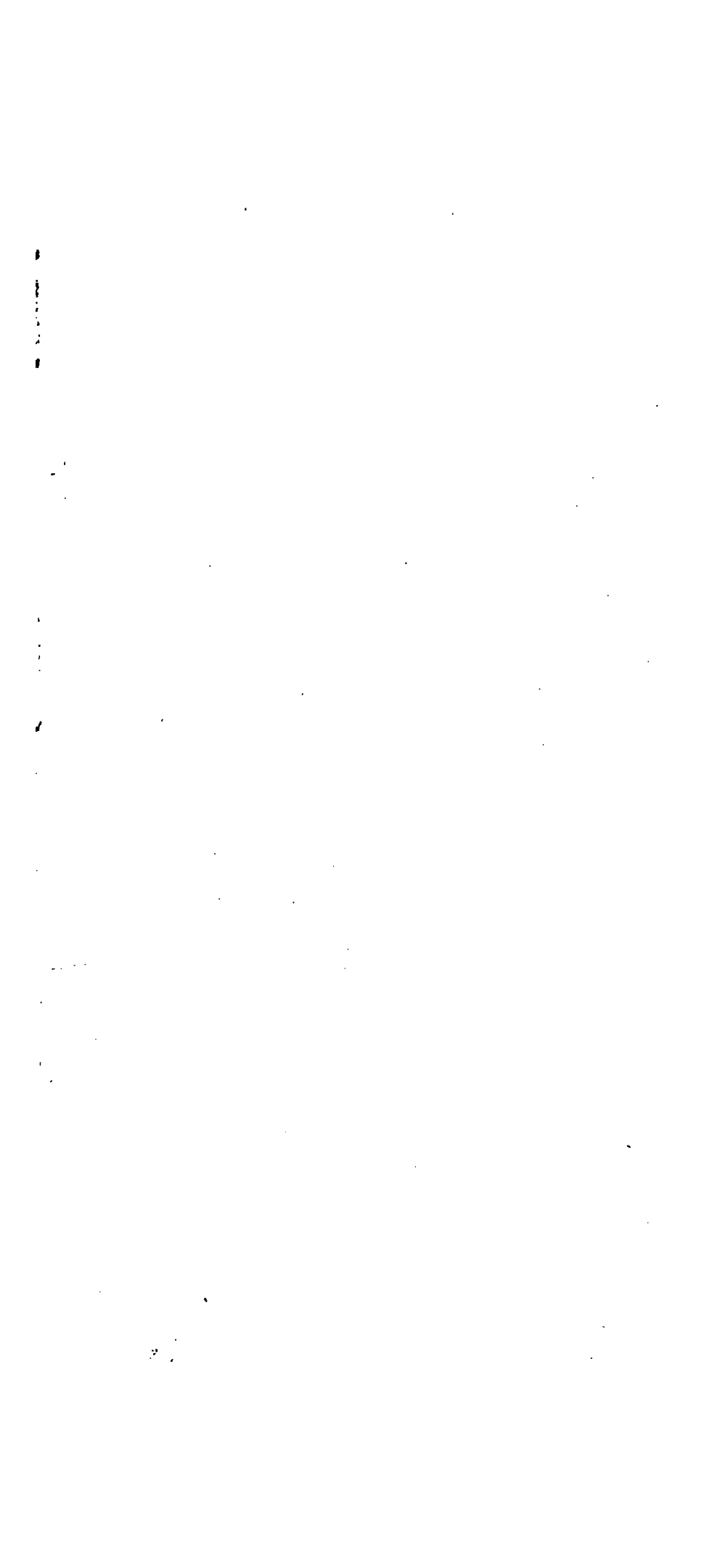
Friends from being enthusiastical, fanatical, or visionary, that it is not only clearly delineated in the scriptures, but is in accordance with the very constitution of the human mind. As the human body consists of organized matter fitting it for animal sensation, and requiring material nourishment to support it in the exercise of the functions of animal life; so the human mind, consisting in a germ of intellectual being, requires the aid and influence of the divine spirit, to qualify it for fulfilling the functions of intellectual life. This germ of intellectual being is capable of expanding in time, and of enjoying in eternity the impress or image of the communicable attributes of its divine original. The intellectual capacity yielding to the impressions of the attributes of the divine spirit, whether of light and knowledge, or love and goodness, becomes a recipient of that spiritual nourishment which alone can sustain the faithful mind in all its exercises. The reciprocation of the mind of man under the impressions of that spirit which "giveth it an understanding," is that spiritual intercourse which constitutes essential divine worship, and ever has and will ever remain to be, the alone basis of all true religion and piety. If nothing were brought forth in the human mind but the images and fruits of

the divine spirit, there could be nothing but peace on earth, and good will to men. Turning from the influence and direction of this spirit, and yielding to the impulses and desires of the earthly nature, is the cause of evil in the human heart. As the mind recedes from the divine light, or its spiritual guide, it falls in the same proportion under the influence and control of the sensual nature. Human nature being susceptible of animal sensation and intellectual feeling, appears to form a connecting link between animal and intellectual life. The position of man on the scale of being, connects him with two worlds. The probations arising from his mixed nature are great. His means of safe guidance are amply sufficient, and his enjoyment and happiness commensurate with his trials and obedience to the unfoldings of the redeeming spirit of Christ.

From an impartial review of the nature and operation of the fundamental principle of the society of Friends, there does not appear any just ground for the charge of fanaticism and selfishness. The society claims no exclusive rights or privileges. The Friends stand on a level with their fellow men. The principle of saving light and grace is as free and universal as the light of the sun, or the air of the atmosphere. However

variously the degrees of external knowledge may be diffused among the different classes of men, the monitions and gratulations of divine good, reach every heart in every clime. No external condition precludes the aspirations of the spirit of true devotion.\* Amidst all the various evils of human life, the bland effulgence of celestial virtue, encircling the wounded heart, soothes to resignation and peace.

\* Coloss. c. 1. xxiii.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE OF FRIENDS GRADUALLY ESTABLISHED, AND THE USEFULNESS OF THE SOCIETY EXHIBITED.

About the middle of the seventeenth century,\* the society of Friends began to be generally known, and in process of time their meetings became organized under that christian discipline which still remains in operation. The formation of the society appears to have progressed under the special care of Divine Providence to the raising up of a people to bear testimony to the practical operation of gospel principles. The society adopted no written creed, but received the gospel, in the love of it, as free and unfettered as it was left by Jesus Christ and his apostles. Individual conviction of their fundamental principle, the light of divine grace, or a measure of the spirit of Christ in every mind, was made manifest by corresponding consistent practice, and became the passport to their communion

\* Sewall's History from 1650 to 1666.

or Christian fellowship. No systematic theory of religious opinions founded upon private views, or the judgment of the individuals was imposed upon one another by this society. Every one's conscience was left free and unfettered in his progress in the development of views respecting faith or belief, provided his practice and example were consistent with fundamental principle. As the society increased over a wide extent of country, it became requisite to adopt those rules and regulations into which the wisdom of truth led, properly to minister to the wants and exigencies of the body, in a visible church capacity. These rules and regulations have been denominated Christian discipline. They were adopted from time to time by the body according to the wants and circumstances of the society. Being founded on gospel principles, they were designed to be administered in gospel feeling, for the help and welfare of all the members.

The object was to take care of the poor; to oversee orphans, and others under suffering in that day of trial; to superintend at marriages, that they might be orderly accomplished, and generally to extend care over each other, that the life and conversation of the members might be consistent with their profession. On this

subject William Penn says in his preface to George Fox's Journal, p. 33. "They distinguish between imposing any practice that immediately regards faith or worship, (which is never to be done, nor suffered or submitted unto,) and requiring Christian compliance with those methods that only respect church business in its more civil part and concern, and that regard the discreet and orderly maintainance of the character of the society as a sober and religious community." The discipline of the society was not to interfere with the faith of the members; but to superintend the practice. It was an outward rule, to lay hold on outward irregularities, and endeavour to regain and restore offenders, in the love and meekness of the gospel. It was the care of the body continually acting on itself, for preservation, or extending a hedge around the members that they might not stray from the fountain of Christian strength. The proper administration of Christian discipline, has always been an object of great interest and solicitude to the society. On this subject the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia in the year 1808, handed down to its members the following advices.\*

"As it consisted with the will of our Heavenly

\* See Christian Advices.



Father, after He had called our primitive Friends from the various forms of religion to worship Him in spirit, to lead them into the establishing and support of a Christian discipline for the help and preservation of the body in a consistency of conduct, we exhort all who are concerned in the management of the discipline, that they fervently seek to be clothed with a right mind therein, that nothing may be done through rashness, strife, or vain glory, but all with a single eye to the honour of truth, and the good of individuals.

“The more we experience a preparation of heart for the exercise of our respective gifts, the more amply shall we evince the expression of the tongue to be seasoned with that living virtue and divine power which proceeds from our Holy Head, and thus in conducting the important concerns of society we shall be enabled to example the beloved youth in a manner which will evidence to them, that neither tradition nor a mere outward education can fitly prepare them for successors in the church.” “Therefore let all beware of their own spirits and keep in a gracious temper, that so they may be fitted for the service of the house of God, whose house we are, if we keep upon the foundation that God hath laid, and such He will build up, and teach

how to build up one another in him; and as every member must feel life in himself and all from one head, this life will not hurt itself in any, but be tender of itself in all; for by this one life of the word, ye were begotten, and by it ye are nourished and made to grow into your several services in the church of God; it is no man's learning nor artificial acquirements; it is no man's riches, nor greatness in this world; it is no man's eloquence and natural wisdom, that makes him fit for government in the church of Christ."

Christian discipline founded on gospel principle, and administered in gospel feeling and qualification, purged the society of Friends of many pretenders to their profession, whose extravagant and irregular behaviour, afforded reason to believe they had not come experimentally to submit to the operation of the Divine power. The society in the exercise of its disciplinary functions, consistent with gospel liberty and simplicity, has exhibited to the world, for several generations, the practicability of church government unconnected with political establishment or sanction. It concentrated the energies of the society, the effect of which was practically to illumine the path of the progress of religious and civil liberty with their concomitant train of ameliorating influences on the general state of social life

Whatever other circumstances contributed to the promotion of religious toleration and liberty of conscience, the society of Friends as a body always adhered to the enjoyment of this unalienable right. No threatening, persecution, nor suffering could deter them from maintaining their testimony to the public worship of God in a way they believed to be required of them. When their meetings were broken up by violence, they continued to meet in the street, and even on the ruins of their meeting houses in the most inclement season.\* On these trying occasions, the passive perseverance and orderly deportment of the society, combined with their explicit and steady remonstrances to those in power, as well as to the public at large, must have naturally tended to open the public view to see the propriety of adopting a general toleration.

When other religious professors yielded to the pressure of tyrannic sway, the society of Friends by constant perseverance purchased with their blood, the liberty of conscience, and paved the way for succeeding generations more fully to appreciate equal rights.

The political establishment of Pennsylvania under the direction of Friends, afforded models

\* Sewell's History. Vol. 2. page, 3. 4.

in legislation and jurisprudence to surrounding states. The light of practical truth reflecting back from the oppressed of all nations concentrated under the auspices of liberty, has been re-acting on the throne of tyranny, and ultimately will crumble it to dust. The progress of discriminating knowledge, arising from the apprehension of essential principle, under the direction of virtue, is constantly giving an impetus to the power and weight of public opinion, which will in process of time effectually cancel the erroneous dogmas of political and superstitious assumption, and restore to suffering humanity, the enjoyment of its legitimate rights,

The melioration of criminal law and prison discipline owe much to Friends. The abolition of slavery early obtained a deep interest among the objects of their care. Long and persevering endeavours to aid the Indian nations in attaining the habits and conveniences of civilized life, has cost the society great labour and attention, and some of its members much personal solicitude and privation. The education of the children of the poor, and the promotion and support of humane and benevolent institutions, for the indigent, diseased, and distressed, has also claimed their particular attention. Whatever has tended to correct, elevate and properly direct the human

mind, has uniformly received the countenance and support of Friends. The simplicity and practical nature of their public instruction, it is believed, has contributed with other causes to soften or neutralize the asperities of sectarian dogmas. The non-resisting principles, and peaceable testimony of the society, and the illustration of Christian virtue, by practical benevolence, have dissipated the cloud of sectarian prejudice, and reached the kindred feeling of human kindness in many minds, shedding a radiance of social peace, concord, and domestic comfort in many circles of general society.

In exhibiting those traits of the usefulness of the society of Friends, there is no intention to lessen the usefulness of other religious professors, who have been fellow labourers in the promotion of Christian knowledge and human comfort.—It is believed there has been a general advancement in the comprehension of correct or fundamental principles, and that as true knowledge increases, charity will prevail, and the benefits of effective religion become more generally experienced.

## CHAPTER V.

## REVIEW OF THE GENERAL CAUSES OF DECLENSION IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, THE SETTLEMENT OF THE SOCIETY IN PENNSYLVANIA, AND SUBSEQUENT DECLENSION.

Having noticed the purity and simplicity of the fundamental principle of Christianity, and adverted to the declension of the primitive churches, and viewed the reformation until the rise of the society of Friends; and having briefly delineated the peculiar principle, the progress and usefulness of this society, it is an object of interesting solicitude, in connexion with the light furnished by the past review, to proceed to the consideration of those facts, which have transpired within the limits of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends for some years past, so as to arrive at a correct judgment in regard to its present state. In approaching this subject, there is need of that charity, "which thinketh no evil," to shield the mind against any undue excitement or unpleasant feeling, respecting indi-

viduals who may have taken a prominent part in transactions apparently inconsistent with correct principles, and known practice.

In the formation of the human character, there are few individuals able to resist the pressure of circumstances continually acting on them, giving a particular direction to the mind in forming opinions and producing habits that dispose to their corresponding modes of action. Hence, however we may decide on the tendency of actions themselves, there seems a tenderness and charity due to one another, as it regards motives, arising from different degrees of mental light or spiritual feeling. How far individuals may be blamable in neglecting the means of having their views rightly corrected, and their motives to action properly purified and wisely directed, must be left to Him who alone can judge the heart.

The religious society of Friends, like all other human societies, appears to have been more or less, subject to change. However pure the principle professed, or however judicious and efficacious the system of discipline adopted; yet a derelection from practical principle, could not fail to prove a cause of declension both in individuals and in particular meetings, as well as in more extended districts, or even in the society

at large. If we recur to the gradual corruption of the primitive churches, we shall be the less surprised at the possible declension of any modern society from the purity of first principles. The descendants of primitive Friends, having their religion by education and tradition, instead of conviction and feeling experience, appear to have become much less scrupulous in regard to the maintenance of the practical testimonies of the society, and more disposed to neglect the prompt administration of the discipline upon offenders, than their worthy predecessors. Hence a door was opened for a visible declension in the society. As the spirit of the world gained admittance, the love of many, "to the law and testimony," waxed cold. The increase of wealth and riches raised many above the simplicity of the truth, and disqualified others to be usefully engaged in the concerns of the church. Individuals succeeding to the estates and places of their ancestors in the society, were not always sufficiently prepared rightly to sustain the proper administration of Christian discipline; but too often, in the will and wisdom of man, endeavoured to maintain their place and standing in conformity to the views of their own importance. It must be obvious, that in proportion to the number and influence of individuals of this description, a



foundation would be laid for reducing the beautiful simplicity of Christian discipline, to a mere mechanical system, differing but in form from other political establishments of church government. In the absence of that spirit which giveth life, the discipline could not fail to become as a dead letter, and be construed to answer the purposes of individuals endeavouring to build up themselves, instead of labouring after those qualifications which prepare to become the "servants of all." As individuals under the wisdom and policy of a worldly spirit, gained admission to important stations in the society, the true life and virtue of the principle would be departed from, and lukewarmness and consequent declension must ensue. Accordingly, we find by the representations of John Griffith, in his Journal of religious travels and labours in the ministry from the year 1748 to 1770, that there appeared to be in England an almost universal declension in the society from the spirit and practice of primitive Friends. This faithful and upright servant says, "We have no such examples in the prophets, or in Christ and his apostles, of indulgence, and winking at wrong things, and false ease. They in their concern to testify against such things, had no fear of breaking unity, nor disturbing the quiet and peace of any people, let their

rank or station be what it may. Had this noble spirit of ancient zeal been more generally exercised, in plain dealing, and speaking the truth one to another, the mournful declension so justly complained of amongst us as a people, would not have so generally prevailed."

"It may be justly queried, what could the Lord have done for us that he has not done? Notwithstanding which, what indifference, lukewarmness and insensibility as to the life of religion, is now to be found amongst numbers under our name; nay in some places, this painful lethargy is become almost general; although I hope a few may be excepted, who are much afflicted on that account, being exceedingly burthened with an earthly carnal spirit."—Page 172.

Although a pretty general revival appears to have taken place in England, through the instrumentality of John Griffith and his fellow labourers, respecting the support and right exercise of the discipline; yet the same general causes of declension have been operating in the society from that period, to the present time. The accumulation of wealth in particular families, occasionally blended with weight of moral and religious character, has created a considerable distinction of classes in the modern society of Friends in England. There are perhaps in that

country all classes, from the lowest menial up to the "eminent and distinguished Quaker," who treads on the heels of the bishop or grandee. It is not supposed that wealth and influence, or any eminent distinction justly acquired, are censurable in themselves; but if with a selfish view they are brought to bear on the concerns of religious society, they may produce very different results from the meekness, gentleness and charity, which are the native offspring of the professed principle of the religious society of Friends. Individuals of real or assumed high standing, mingling in family connexion, having one view, one interest and pursuit, may possibly have greatly contributed to give a direction and tone to the society, of a very different complexion from the simplicity, plainness, integrity and practical virtue of its original founders. Hence, of latter time, we have heard that an individual of high standing has accommodated his views to a greatly declined state of religious society, by endeavouring to fritter down the important practical testimonies of Friends to mere "distinguishing peculiarities." A more ungenerous censure on the society could hardly be made. If there was no difference between the fundamental principles of Friends and those of other religious professors, whence was it that Friends were persecuted by

all other denominations who had obtained power?  
Let us recur to simple facts.

We have already seen, that the national reformed churches stopped short in their progress. They became satisfied with the muddy stream of human rites and ceremonies, while the society of Friends pressed forward to the fountain head or living spring, and professed nothing more than the simple truth as it is in Jesus, leaving all the unavailing ceremonial forms which sprung up in the will and wisdom of man, seeking his own gratification.

The testimonies given Friends to bear were produced by the Divine Spirit bringing forth its fruits in practice, and for the maintenance of these "distinguishing peculiarities," many gave up their liberty, their estates, and even their lives. It is natural for those who live after the flesh, to deride and persecute those who are born after the spirit. Those who turn from the ministrations of the spirit, will ever be in danger of becoming enticed with the images of the fleshly nature, and seek for a rest, short of that practical mortification and death unto self, which every true Christian, born of the spirit, must experience. From this simple view, we may see the generation of that spirit of assumed orthodoxy, which of latter years has burst out in the society

of Friends, threatening to lead captive the whole heritage. But the tender care and merciful compassion of Israel's unslumbering shepherd, has opened a way for Friends in this country to remain faithful to the law and the testimony of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; and there is no doubt but the oppressed seed in England will, in due time, experience enlargement from that bondage of assumed control, which for years past has been endeavouring to make itself strong.

The same causes, under the same circumstances, will produce the same effects. The society of Friends in America, from a small beginning have become a numerous people. The simplicity, industry, and frugal economy requisite in new settlements, are in some degree congenial with the views and habits into which the principles of Friends would practically lead. Whatever were the trials and privations of the Friends who first settled in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, they appear to have prospered in the maintenance of their religious principles; in the formation of civil or political communities, and in obtaining the means of furnishing their descendants with "goodly heritages." Many individuals by prudent foresight, and industrious management, with other circumstances concurring, laid a foundation for their offspring to

realize important stations, both in the religious and civil community which they could not otherwise have reached. This no doubt is the origin of the wealth of many families, whose descendants at present plume themselves on their distinction. A review of the progress of these first settlers, is gratifying to humanity. The practical operation of pious and virtuous principles, produced a degree of comfort and happiness, perhaps unequalled in the history of nations.

Thomas Clarkson, in his memoirs of the life of William Penn,\* in adverting to this subject, says: "It has been supposed that during the seventy years while William Penn's principles prevailed, or the Quakers had the principal share in the government, there was no spot on the globe, where, number for number, there was so much virtue or so much true happiness as among the inhabitants of Pennsylvania;" and that "during this period the latter country exhibited (setting aside the early difficulties of a new colony) a kind of little paradise upon earth."

Various circumstances combined to heighten the enjoyment of the society of Friends, in their first settlement in this country. They were delivered from the vexatious persecution of their

\* 2 Vol. page, 371.

enemies; they felt in a strange land the protecting care of a gracious Providence, and by persevering industry, the wilderness became fruitful fields around them. They rejoiced in hope, and mingled sympathies in recollections of the associations of their youth. Excluded from the attractions or exhibitions of those occurrences, continually arising on the surface of redundant society, they sought and found an asylum and satisfying enjoyment in the exercise of heart-felt devotion, and in the promotion of practical righteousness.

The second and third generation, advanced in the progress of things, under other trains of circumstances. They had not felt the hand of oppression: their views were limited to what they saw and heard: without much experience they could follow in the path opened for them, by the faithful labour of their fathers. Having never seen any other situation than the scenes around them, they were less conscious of the value and importance of those advantages placed within their reach. The continual increase of mixed foreign population, bringing with them their manners and customs, soon made the new world an epitome of the old.

The rising youth prone to imbibe impressions and views which lead to greatness and affluence,

are liable to yield, by a gradual conformity, to the spirit of this world, which fails not to lessen the influence of devotion, and diminish the weight of religious obligation. A compromise between principle and practice, may consist with external observance, but will uniformly deaden the feeling, and disqualify for religious usefulness. In confirmation of this view, we may refer to the experience and testimony of John Smith of Marlborough, an aged minister, as recorded in John Woolman's Journal, page 173. In the Yearly Meeting of ministers and elders, in the year 1764, under great exercise of spirit, this valuable Friend observed, "that he had been a member of the society sixty years, and well remembered that in those early times, Friends were a plain lowly minded people; and that there was much tenderness and contrition in their meetings. That at twenty years from that time, the society increasing in wealth, and in some degree conforming to the fashions of the world, true humility was less apparent, and their meetings in general not so lively and edifying. That at the end of forty years, many of them were grown very rich; that wearing of fine costly garments, and using watches became customary with them, their sons and their daughters; and many of the society made a specious appear-



ance in the world; which marks of outward wealth and greatness appeared on some in our meetings of ministers and elders; and as these things became more prevalent, so the powerful overshadowings of the Holy Ghost were less manifest in the society. That there had been a continued increase of these ways until now; and that the weakness which hath now overspread the society, and the barrenness manifest among us, is matter of much sorrow." At the same time this venerable Friend expressed a hope or belief "that the Lord would bring back his people from these things into which they were thus degenerated, but that his faithful servants, must first go through great and heavy exercises therein."

About this period, a concern appears to have been raised in the society, to check the current of those causes producing deadness and declension. To redeem the society from the defilement of holding slaves, and to guard its members against taking an active part in civil government supported by the sword, were objects of peculiar concern. This concern ultimately proved in a good degree successful. The difficulty and troubles produced by the revolutionary war, pressed hard in many instances on the society, and purged it of some of its lukewarm members, tending

to settle others more firmly on the immovable foundation, and perhaps in some places a revival of primitive simplicity, integrity, and feeling was witnessed. "When the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants thereof learn righteousness."

There is no doubt many estimable and pious individuals fulfilled the labours of their day in the bosom of this society, through all the stages of its progress, and there are at the present time many who are running their race in faith and patience, united in an exercise of spirit for the more general prevalence of that love, charity, moderation, forbearance, and consistent walking, which are the genuine characteristics of the gospel of Christ.



## CHAPTER VI.

## CAUSES OF THE LATE DISORDERS IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, WITHIN THE YEARLY MEETING, HELD IN PHILADELPHIA.

Whatever may appear to be the immediate cause of present difficulties and disorder, deviation from the leadings and guidance of the fundamental principle of the society, is the *true* and *real* cause. We have seen this principle leading the society into that beautiful and efficient order, that hath been blessed for the help, strength, and preservation of the body to the present time. The recent disorders that have occurred in the administration of discipline, must have sprung from a different root or cause, than that from which the society took its rise. If we take a review of the society for the last forty years, it will appear that the same causes which produced declension in its previous stages, have been operating with accumulating force.

The confederation of the United States into a

national government, paved the way for bringing all the resources and energies of the country into active operation, and opened the door for general commercial intercourse. The subsequent French revolutionary war engrossing the general care and attention of Europe, left the United States in the almost unrivalled enjoyment of lucrative commerce. Unexampled prosperity for many years, shed its radiance on the United States, enlightening and cheering the path of every class of citizens, and the means of increasing wealth were placed within the reach of almost every one. The society of Friends was generally in a position to share in the public prosperity, and with the means already acquired, many by successful business obtained independent competence and wealth, while their influence and power were advancing in religious society. Wealth and power entwine themselves deeply round the human heart, and have often involved individuals and societies, in proceedings at variance with their own principles.

The society of Friends, by a long course of persevering virtue, justly gained a respectable standing in the world, especially in Pennsylvania. They were the original settlers, legislators, and magistrates of the colony. They have generally patronized virtuous public institutions, obtained

the confidence of their fellow citizens, and even the praise of enemies. All the members are required to be of respectable deportment; many of them are rich and wealthy; and the society as a body has accumulated, by the donations and legacies of individuals, a very large estate, and under these circumstances cannot fail to have considerable influence in the public community. It is not improbable that the high character, and respectable standing of the society, have proved a snare to it. Individuals, without coming under the power of the cross, may have become members of the society from no higher motives than a love of popularity. The influence of the reputation of the society, acting on individuals engaged in the administration of the discipline upon offenders, has too often induced them to look more at the blot brought on the society, than to the restoration of the offender; unwisely supposing that the infliction of the penalty obliterates the stain, more than turning a delinquent from the error of his way would add lustre to the virtue and efficacy of religious principle. Many exercised minds believe, that this has greatly tended to produce a superficial zeal in unmortified tempers, and has introduced great deadness and spiritual desolation into the society.

It may be queried, how unmortified tempers

have come to bear rule in a society, whose principle is spiritual, and whose discipline is professed to be administered under the influence of the spirit?

It is perhaps by degrees, that members who are not qualified come to busy themselves with the spiritual functions of discipline. The pecuniary concerns of the society of course devolve on individuals conversant in the busy scenes of active life. Competent external knowledge and circumstances, are thought essential qualifications. These qualifications often meet in individuals deeply engaged in the pursuit and spirit of the world. Success in extensive concerns, clothes the agent with corresponding importance. The operation of his will and power becomes habitual. He is accustomed to take the lead, and those around him, to obey. Individuals thus circumstanced, clothed with all the respectability of social and domestic life, coming to be entrusted with the concerns of religious society, can hardly fail to consider themselves of importance in the body. In the direction and promotion of the interests of society, the same policy will naturally be preferred, which in other cases has proved successful. Individuals of this description becoming associated for years in the control and direction of the affairs of the society,

naturally prefer one another, The expression of their opinions or sentiments are listened to with attention—they are appointed on business of importance; they are looked up to with deference, and by degrees they come to suppose that the welfare of the society depends on their guardian care, although the subjugation of the natural temper never has been habitually experienced. The ardour and restiveness of such individuals, will be in proportion as their importance and standing seem to be affected; and hence, we may see the germinating root of those particular causes producing the unseemly and painful disorders, that have lately been witnessed in the society.

The progress of a superficial and overbearing spirit has deeply exercised many faithful minds who have been removed from works to rewards. The venerable and self denying Thomas Scattergood; the pious and philanthropic William Savery; the feeling and upright Arthur Howell, saw in their days of probation, the current and tide of those causes setting in, that have threatened to overwhelm the living with the dead. They saw with painful concern, the prevalence of that superficial policy, which was mingling itself with the administration of the affairs and



interests of the society, bringing the true seed and innocent life under a yoke of bondage.

This yoke may be said, to use a familiar figure, to have been broken by the multitude of rivets driven in to strengthen it. The event seems a mercy to all concerned. It is a mercy to those individuals, who, in their eagerness to grasp and hold power, have often repressed and crushed the feelings of visited children, that the means of injuring themselves by oppressing others, are now very much limited and circumscribed. It is a mercy to those who have been "grinding as in the prison house," that enlargement has come by the over-ruling power of Divine Providence, setting an open door before the "oppressed in Israel, and gathering the dispersed in Judea." It is a mercy to the church at large, affording a renewed evidence that the "Lord reigneth;" and that his mercy and goodness still embrace his truth, ministering a way for it in the earth.

It is mortifying and humbling to recur to those public disorders that have marked the progress of a few individuals, who have risen up in the bosom of the society of Friends, disturbing the peace and unity of the body, and so far interrupting the legitimate operation of the discipline, as to render it indispensable for the society, by re-

currence to first principles, to re-organize the Yearly Meeting of Friends for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the eastern shore of Maryland, in order quietly to disentangle itself from those incumbrances which had obstructed the proper exercise of its functions. The unceasing misrepresentations of those individuals, against the great body of Friends, render this painful task necessary.

A late declaration, purporting to be prepared in a meeting for sufferings in the fourth month last, got up by the principal actors of those measures which have produced the late disorders and commotions in the Society, seems to require that a true statement of facts should be exhibited, that the yearly meeting of Friends may be cleared from the defamatory aspersions of those individuals, who, for years past, have been assuming to themselves unjustifiable power in the society, and are now censuring those who have been instrumental in the hand of Providence, to rescue it from their usurpation.

As far as appears, the first public manifestation of disorder connected with the present difficulties, occurred in a monthly meeting held at Pine street, where Elias Hicks was in attendance in the tenth month 1819. After having relieved his mind in the men's, he asked and obtained lib-

erty to visit the womens' meeting. In his absence, the mens' meeting adjourned, although their business was not completed. This was an uncommon occurrence, and excited considerable sensation among many members of that meeting. It appears to have been done by a few influential individuals as a mark of disrespect to Elias Hicks, or rather, it exhibited evidence of their resenting the application of his testimony respecting the produce of slave labour. Speaking on this subject, Elias said, "there were some who had gone retrograde, some who in obedience to the clear openings of the light of truth felt bound to deny themselves in that particular, had by giving way to the deceivableness of unrighteousness, fallen from the tenderness of feeling once witnessed so far as again to use articles produced by the labour of slaves without restraint." An influential individual in this meeting, who for twenty years had abstained from the use of the produce of slave labour had lately discovered that this part of self denial had been taken up in his own will and now felt so irritable on the subject, as to take great offence at Elias Hicks' faithful testimony. Hence a prejudice was excited in the mind of this individual, that became the spring of this, and many other unseemly actions.

Although adjourning the meeting in the

absence of a travelling minister, may seem a trivial circumstance, it is believed to have been unprecedented amongst Friends. It exhibited a marked disrespect to a stranger engaged with general acceptance in the work of the ministry—it was unkind in itself, and set an example of insubordination to the accustomed relations of society. At this period it is not understood that there were direct charges made of unsoundness against Elias Hicks. There were murmurs raised and whispered against the close application of his testimonies, which were supposed to bear hard on particular classes. It was alledged that his practical instruction was too severe. That he was too much in advance of the age, and that society was not prepared for the application of his close views.

These murmurs and whispers appear to have been encouraged, and cherished by those individuals who felt themselves rather lessened by the light of his testimonies respecting the product of slave labour, and unwisely lessened themselves yet more in the eyes of their brethren by an injudicious act of public disrespect, inconsistent with Christian kindness and comity.

Previous to this occurrence Elias Hicks had for many years made full proof of his ministry, confirming by example the testimony given him

to bear. He was born on Long Island, in the year 1748, and educated in that plain and simple manner which was customary at that time in the society of Friends. Faithful to the unfoldings of truth in his own mind, his understanding became opened in its light, and his judgment settled in a close adherence to its manifestations, which by degrees qualified him to comprehend the workings of evil in many of its mysterious forms, and to stand even to the present time at the advanced age of eighty years, as a faithful watchman on the walls of Zion, notwithstanding the united exertions of erring brethren to lessen his usefulness.

The next disorderly transaction that is recollected, occurred in the 8th Mo. 1822, at a meeting for sufferings. A number of the members previously requested by some individuals, who in a private caucus appear to have resolved on the measure, remained in conference, when, according to the testimony of Abraham Lower, it was stated in substance by Jonathan Evans, "that Elias Hicks had obtained from his Monthly meeting a certificate to visit Friends in this city, and as it was well known that he held doctrines that are not the doctrines of Friends, some steps ought to be taken to prevent him from disseminating them among us." This vague allegation

appears by the letter of the ten elders to Elias Hicks, dated 12th Mo. 19th, 1822, to have been predicated on the representation, of Joseph Whithall, arising from his misconstruction of some expressions of Elias Hicks at New York Yearly meeting in the 5th Mo. preceding. "Detached sentences may be taken from any writer or speaker, and by the help of constructions be made to convey an idea altogether different from that intended by the writer or speaker. If we would understand his sentiments we must take into view his whole design." Upon this *ex parte* evidence, these *selected* members of the meeting for sufferings agreed to act as if Elias Hicks was unsound, and appointed a committee to take an early opportunity with him on his arrival in the city, and it was advised "not to dispute with him, for he was full of words, but in a prompt way put a stop to his travelling in the ministry." His influence in New York Yearly meeting was said to be so great that Friends there could do nothing with him, and that Friends in Philadelphia could only stop him.

At a period of Christian society enlightened as the present, a calm review of this transaction excites blushes for humanity. Here we see a man, venerable for his age and experience, and who has uniformly sustained for fifty years of public life the

most unexceptionable character and reputation, clandestinely arraigned before self appointed judges, and upon the most vague allegations, treated as an offender for expressions said to be uttered three months before in his own Yearly meeting. It seems as if those persons thought they had not only an exclusive right to judge and act for the society of Friends in Philadelphia, but for the society at large; and that they were competent to achieve what no other department of it could perform.

Previous to Elias Hicks entering Philadelphia in the 12th Mo. 1824, Ezra Comfort, and Isaiah Bell, who were in attendance with him at the Southern Quarterly meeting, conceived exceptions against some of his expressions, much in the same way that Joseph Whithall had done, which with the help of a little imaginary construction, made the appearance of a formidable charge.

These Friends without due consideration, or taking a seasonable opportunity with Elias Hicks, unwisely communicated their apprehensions to his secret accusers, who had already prejudged his case. This additional show of testimony was laid hold of with avidity, and those Friends drawn into great perplexity and trouble, by putting their signatures to a written representation, of the tendency of which they did not appear to

be fully aware, as twenty two members of the southern Quarter subsequently signed a correction of their statement, which entirely nullified the charge unkindly drawn from them. "When the rulers of the people cause them to err," the most distressing consequences ensue. When these Friends made their representations to a *favourite ruler*, instead of encouraging them to violate the discipline, he ought to have directed them into the path of gospel order, so as to have avoided those unnecessary afflictions, which this circumstance brought on them and their families.

Soon after Elias Hicks arrived in the city, to proceed on a visit to the families of Green street Monthly meeting, the committee appointed by the private conference in the 8th Mo., waited on him with a representation of the charges against him. Elias denied their authority to question him, but upon their telling him they came in love as brethren, he was willing to answer them, and after a free intercourse, they went away apparently satisfied. Whatever the report of the committee was, the principals in this prosecution were not to be diverted from their purpose. To give some colour and weight to their proceedings, nearly all the elders in the city were summoned to meet as in an official capacity, and no doubt they hoped their victim was sure.



They requested an interview with Elias Hicks, who denied their authority, and declined meeting them, but was ready to produce certificates expressive of the unity and concurrence of his Monthly and Quarterly meetings with him in his present service, which had been furnished him according to the established order of society; yet in condescension to some of his particular Friends, he afterwards agreed to meet the elders in Green street meeting house, on the 5th day succeeding. Considering the uncommon proceedings of the elders, Elias deemed it expedient to have witnesses present to hear the charges made against him, and to produce testimony should it appear necessary to repel the accusation. John Comly, Robert Moore, John Moore, John Hunt, and others, accompanied him on the occasion; some of whom had been at the Southern Quarter, and could give direct evidence in the case. This reasonable and wise step on the part of Elias Hicks entirely frustrated the present intentions of his opposers. The principal promoters of this measure appear to have been appalled at the light of the countenances of honest and upright men. They could not take any step in their presence. Under pretence that the meeting *was not select*, they declined all friendly conference, and abruptly left the house, alledging that “ministers

were amenable to the elders." It is understood that witnesses were in waiting to be called in to support the charges to be made against Elias, and then, it is believed, the elders were to give judgment against him without permitting defence or respite. They were not to reason with him, for he was full of words, but roundly to charge and give judgment, vainly supposing that their opinion had the power and force of law, and would in future incapacitate him to travel in the ministry. All these devices failed to make any impression on Elias Hicks. They openly showed the weakness and imprudence of those who had set themselves against him. How unwise and unjustifiable for a few individuals to arrogate to themselves all the power of the society, and pretend to disqualify a member of another Yearly meeting, having in his possession the regular certificates of his own meeting, approbatory of his religious service.

The following are the written communications between the elders and Elias Hicks, accompanied by the certificate of twenty two members of the Southern Quarter in relation thereto.

*Letter from the Ten Elders to Elias Hicks.*

TO ELIAS HICKS,

Friends in Philadelphia having, for a considerable time past, heard of thy holding and promulgating doctrines different from, and repugnant to those held by our religious society, it was cause of uneasiness and deep concern to them, as their sincere regard and engagement for the promotion of the cause of truth, made it very desirable that all the members of our religious Society should move in true harmony, under the leading and direction of our Blessed Redeemer: upon being informed of thy sentiments expressed by Joseph Whitall: that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, until after the Baptism of John, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, and that he was no more than a man; that the same power that made Christ a Christian must make us Christians; and that the same power that saved him must save us; many Friends were much affected therewith, and some time afterwards, several Friends being together in the city on subjects relating to our religious Society, they received an account from Ezra Comfort, of some of thy expressions in the public general meeting immediately succeeding the Southern Quarterly meet-

ing lately held in the State of Delaware, which was also confirmed by his companion Isaiah Bell: that Jesus Christ was the first man that introduced the Gospel dispensation, the Jews being under the outward and ceremonial law or dispensation, it was necessary that there should be some outward miracle, as the healing of the outward infirmities of the flesh, and raising the outward dead bodies, in order to introduce the Gospel dispensation; he had no more power given him than man, for he was no more than man; he had nothing to do with the healing of the soul, for that belongs to God only; Elisha had the same power to raise the dead; that man, being obedient to the Spirit of God in him could arrive at as great, or greater degree of righteousness, than Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God, neither do I think it robbery for man to be equal with God; then endeavoured to show that by attending to that stone cut out of the mountain without hands, or the seed in man, it would make man equal with God, saying, for that stone in man was the entire God. On hearing which, it appeared to Friends a subject of such great importance, and of such deep interest to the welfare of our religious Society, as to require an early extension of care, in order, that if any incorrect statement had been

made, it should as soon as possible be rectified, or if true, thou might be possessed of the painful concern of Friends, and their sense and judgment thereon. Two of the Elders accordingly waited on thee on the evening of the day of thy arriving in the city, and although thou denied the statement, yet, thy declining to meet these two Elders in company with those who made it, left the minds of Friends without relief: one of the Elders who had called on thee, repeated his visit on the next day but one, and again requested thee to see the two Elders and the Friends who made the above statements, which thou again declined. The Elders from the different Monthly meetings in the city were then convened, and requested a private opportunity with thee, which thou also refused, yet the next day consented to meet them at a time and place of thy own fixing; but when assembled, a mixed company being collected, the Elders could not in this manner enter into business which they considered of a nature not to be investigated in any other way than in a select private opportunity; they therefore considered that meeting a clear indication of thy continuing to decline to meet the Elders, as by them proposed. Under these circumstances it appearing that thou art not willing to hear and disprove the charges brought against thee,

we feel it a duty to declare, that we cannot have religious unity with thy conduct, nor with the doctrines thou art charged with promulgating.

Signed, 12th Mo. 19th, 1822.

*Caleb Pierce,*  
*Leonard Snowden,*  
*Joseph Scattergood,*  
*Samuel P. Griffitts,*  
*T. Stewardson,*  
*Edward Randolph,*  
*Israel Maule,*  
*Ellis Yarnall,*  
*Richard Humphries,*  
*Thomas Wistar.*

---

*Elias Hicks' Letter to the foregoing Ten Elders.*

TO CALEB PIERCE and the other Friends,

Having been charged by you of unsoundness of principle and doctrine, founded on reports spread among the people in an unfriendly manner, and contrary to the order of our discipline, by Joseph Whitall, as stated in the letter from you dated the 19th inst.; and as these are charges not literally true, being founded on his own forced and improper construction of my words, I deny them; and as I do not consider myself amenable to him, or any other, for

crimes laid to my charge as being committed in the course of the sitting of our last yearly meeting, as not any of my fellow members of that meeting discovered or noticed any such things, which I presume not to be the case, as not an individual has mentioned any such thing to me, but contrary thereto, many of our valuable Friends (who had heard some of these foul reports promulgated by an individual of our city) acknowledged the great satisfaction they had with my services and exercises in the course of that meeting, and were fully convinced, that all these foul reports were false; and this view is fully confirmed by a certificate granted me by the monthly and quarterly meetings of which I am a member, in which they express their full unity with me, and which meetings were held a considerable time after our yearly meeting, in the course of which Joseph Whitall has presumed to charge me with unsoundness, contrary to the sense of the yearly, quarterly and monthly meetings of which I am a member, and to whom only I hold myself amenable for all conduct transacted within their limits. The other charges against me made by Ezra Comfort, as expressed in your letter, are in the general incorrect, as is proved by the annexed certificate; and moreover as Ezra Comfort has departed from gospel order in

not mentioning his uneasiness to me when present with me, and when I could have appealed to Friends of that meeting to have justified me, therefore I consider Ezra Comfort to have acted disorderly and contrary to discipline; and these are the reasons that induced me to refuse a compliance with your requisitions, as considering them arbitrary and contrary to the established order of our Society.

(Signed)

E. HICKS.

Philadelphia, 12 mo. 21, 1822.

---

*Letter from Three Members of the Southern Quarterly Meeting, concerning Elias Hicks.*

We the undersigned being occasionally in the city of Philadelphia, when a letter was produced and handed us, signed by ten of its citizens, Elders of the Society of Friends, and directed to Elias Hicks; after persuing and deliberately considering the charges therein against him, for holding and propagating doctrines inconsistent with our religious testimonies, and more especially those said by Ezra Comfort and Isaiah Bell, to be held forth at a meeting immediately succeeding the late Southerly Quarterly Meeting, and we being members of the Southern quarter,



and present at the said meeting, we are free to state, for the satisfaction of the first mentioned Friends, and all others whom it may concern, that we apprehend the charges exhibited by the two Friends named, are without substantial foundation; and in order to give a clear view, we think it best and proper here to transcribe the said charges exhibited, and our own understanding of the several, viz. "That Jesus Christ was the first man that introduced the Gospel Dispensation, the Jews being under the outward and ceremonial law or dispensation, it was necessary there should be some outward miracles, as healing the outward infirmities of the flesh, and raising the outward dead bodies, in order to introduce the gospel dispensation;" this in substance is correct. "That he had no more power given him than man," this sentence is incorrect; and also, "That he had nothing to do with the healing of the soul, for that belongs to God only," is likewise incorrect; and the next sentence "That Elisha also had the same power to raise the dead" should be transposed thus to give Elias's expressions. "By the same power it was that Elisha raised the dead." "That man being obedient to the spirit of God in him could arrive at a great or greater degree of righteousness than Jesus Christ," this is incorrect, "That Jesus

Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God," with annexing the other part of the paragraph mentioned by the holy apostle would be correct. "Neither do I think it robbery for man to be equal with God," is incorrect. "Then endeavouring to show that by attending to that stone cut out of the mountain without hands or the seed in man, it would make man equal with God," is incorrect; the sentence for that stone in man should stand thus. "That this stone or seed in man had all the attributes of the divine nature that was in Christ and God." This statement and a few necessary remarks we make without comment, save only that we were then of opinion and still are, that the sentiments and doctrines held forth by our said friend Elias Hicks, are agreeable to the opinions and doctrines held by George Fox and other worthy Friends of his time.

12 mo. 21, 1822.

(Signed)

*Robert Moore,*  
*Thomas Turner,*  
*Joseph G. Rowland.*

*Letter from the Ten Elders to Elias Hicks.*

Philadelphia, 1 mo. 4, 1823.

To ELIAS HICKS,

On the perusal of thy letter of the 21st of last month, it was not a little affecting to observe the same disposition still prevalent that avoided a select meeting with the Elders, which meeting consistently with the station we are placed in and with the sense of duty impressive upon us, we were engaged to propose and urge to thee as a means wherein the cause of uneasiness might have been investigated, the Friends who exhibited the complaint fully examined, and the whole business placed in a clear point of view.

On a subject of such importance the most explicit candour and ingenuousness, with a readiness to hear and give complete satisfaction ought ever to be maintained; this the Gospel teaches, and the nature of the case imperiously demanded it. As to the Certificate which accompanied thy letter, made several weeks after the circumstances occurred, it is in several respects, not only vague and ambiguous, but in others (though in different terms) it corroborates the statement at first made. When we take a view of the whole subject, the

doctrines and sentiments which have been promulgated by thee, though under some caution while in this city; and the opinions which thou expressed in an interview between Ezra Comfort and thee, on the 19th ult. we are fully and sorrowfully confirmed in the conclusion, that thou holds and art disseminating principles very different from those which are held and maintained by our religious society.

As thou hast on thy part, closed the door against the brotherly care and endeavours of the elders here for thy benefit, and for the clearing our religious profession, this matter appears of such serious magnitude, so interesting to the peace, harmony, and well being of society, that we think it ought to claim the weighty attention of thy Friends at home.

(Signed)

*Ellis Yarnall,*  
*Thomas Wistar,*  
*Leonard Snowdon,*  
*Joseph Scattergood,*  
*Caleb Peirce,*  
*Samuel P. Griffiths,*  
*Thomas Stewardson,*  
*Edward Randolph,*  
*Israel Maule.*

Being present when the foregoing Letter was concluded on, I unite with the concern and care of my brethren the Elders of this city, that our religious Society might not be under the imputation of holding doctrines which do not accord with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

*Jonathan Evans.*

---

*Letter from Twenty-two Members of the Southern Quarterly Meeting, concerning Elias Hicks.*

We the subscribers, being informed that certain reports have been circulated by Ezra Comfort and Isaiah Bell, that Elias Hicks had propagated unsound doctrine, at our general meeting on the day succeeding our quarterly meeting in the 11th month last, and a Certificate signed by Robert Moore, Joseph Turner, and Joseph G. Rowland, being read, contradicting said reports, the subject has claimed our weighty and deliberate attention, and it is our united judgment, that the Doctrines preached by our said Friend on the day alluded to, were the Truths of the Gospel; and that his labours of love amongst us at our particular meetings, as well as at our said quarterly meeting, were united with by all our members, for aught that appears.

---

And we believe that the Certificate signed by the three Friends above named, is in substance a correct statement of facts.

<i>Elisha Dawson,</i>	<i>George Messeck,</i>
<i>William Dolby,</i>	<i>William W. Moore,</i>
<i>Walter Mifflin,</i>	<i>John Cogwill,</i>
<i>Daniel Bowers,</i>	<i>Samuel Price,</i>
<i>William Levick,</i>	<i>Robert Kemp,</i>
<i>Elias Janell,</i>	<i>John Turner,</i>
<i>Jacob Pennington,</i>	<i>Hartfield Wright,</i>
<i>Jonathan Twibond,</i>	<i>David Wilson,</i>
<i>Henry Swiggitt,</i>	<i>Michael Lowber,</i>
<i>Michael Offley,</i>	<i>Jacob Liventon,</i>
<i>James Brown,</i>	<i>John Cowgill, Junr.</i>

Little Creek, 2 mo. 26th, 1823.

---

I hereby Certify, that I was at the Southern Quarterly Meeting in the 11th month last, but owing to indisposition, I did not attend the general meeting on the day succeeding, and having been present at several meetings with Elias Hicks, as well as at the Quarterly Meeting aforesaid, I can testify my entire unity with the doctrines I have heard him deliver.

*Anthony Whitely.*

.

.

.

.

—

## CHAPTER VII.

## ORIGIN AND DUTIES OF ELDERS IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS—ORTHODOX PARTY FORMED, AND ENDEAVOUR TO INTRODUCE A CREED INTO THE SOCIETY.

To sustain the proceedings of the elders against Elias Hicks, considerable stress has been laid by some on their official character. Let us recur to the history of elders in the society. From a review of the records of the select meeting within the limits of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, it appears that in 1701, a meeting of ministers was held for the mutual encouragement, strength, and comfort of one another, and continued to be held every three months for several years, without the company of elders or any disciplinary powers. In 1706, apprehending a benefit might arise from a few judicious Friends sitting with the ministers in those meetings, the proposal was laid before the Yearly Meeting, but was not concurred with at that time. In 1709 and also in 1712 the proposal for elders appears to have been



carried up from Concord Quarter to the Yearly Meeting, but the consideration was postponed. In 1714, the Yearly Meeting agreed to the nomination of elders by such meetings as were prepared for the measure, and made some regulations thereon. That no misunderstanding might occur respecting the elders, Concord Quarterly Meeting made a minute permitting them to express their feelings in those opportunities. In 1728, further regulations and advices were sent down from the Yearly Meeting to the Quarters on this subject, and in 1755 the state and condition of select meetings being more fully considered by the Yearly Meeting, nine queries were sent down to be answered in the select Preparative meetings and carried up to the Quarters, and thence to the Yearly Meeting.

At this time Monthly Meetings were encouraged to appoint two or more elders in their several meetings: but it was some time before all were brought into the practice. In viewing the present discipline respecting select meetings, it does not appear that elders have any more power than ministers: mutual exhortation is all that is enjoined in the discipline. "We kindly recommend faithful Friends, and especially ministers and elders, to watch over the flock of Christ in their respective places and stations, always ap-

proving themselves, by their pious example in conversation and conduct, to be such as faithfully and diligently walk up to the testimony of the blessed truth whereunto the Lord hath gathered us in this his gospel day.”\*

The legitimate duties of elders in a society constituted as that of Friends, appear to be, the necessary care in holding meetings for worship; seasonably closing the meeting at the proper time; and extending such care to Friends traveling in the ministry, as to aid and assist them in the appointment of meetings, for the furtherance of their religious services. It never was intended by Monthly Meetings to vest in the elders an exclusive authority to judge the ministry. This is the virtual and exclusive power of the Monthly Meeting itself. The discipline has wisely guarded against the encroachment of select members or meetings. “None of the said meetings of ministers and elders are in anywise to interfere with the business of any meeting for discipline.” (Page 67.)

With these facts before us, it is obvious that elders have no official powers beyond the limits of their own Monthly Meeting, as the representatives of which they are to perform such ser-

\* Book of Discipline—Article, Ministers and Elders.

vices as from time to time may be required of them. (Page 63.) The association of the elders of five Monthly Meetings, was therefore wholly illegal as it relates to their functions as elders. It was a voluntary association in which they could not bring into action any thing more than their own private opinion. How unconstitutional and illegal then was it, for these individuals to oppose the order of the society, by forming themselves into an assumed tribunal to try Elias Hicks, on floating rumor, in relation to declarations made within the limits of his own Yearly Meeting.

Although these measures were harmless as respects Elias Hicks, they were the beginning of troubles to the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia. Whatever might have been the motive of these persons, a number of whom were always considered innocent and inoffensive men, there can be no doubt but the transaction itself has produced all the effects of a conspiracy against the order and peace of society. It exhibited the lineament of that party who have for several years been struggling for the entire control of the society, and have at last so overdone their part as to exclude themselves from its bosom. We have seen the first public disorder arising from private prejudice against Elias Hicks. The gratification of this prejudice be-

ing frustrated, the unrelenting and unbending temper of four or five individuals, (who are believed to have been the prime movers in directing those disorganizing measures that have produced so much painful disorder,) stimulated them to increasing exertions, not only to destroy Elias Hicks's public character, but to lay waste the standing of all who would not join with them in their hue and cry of unsoundness.

From this period may be dated the regular organization of a party to decry Elias Hicks, and proclaim unsoundness. Active exertions were made to draw the innocent and unwary into the snares of this party. Private meetings were called by the elders, where the measures pursued against Elias Hicks, and the papers of charges against him, were gravely exhibited; and in some instances they were carried from house to house; all for the express purpose of criminating him and justifying themselves: thus endeavouring to cover one error in conduct by committing another. The progress of this state of things became painfully trying and exercising to many Friends, who earnestly discouraged the promotion of party feeling, and were disposed to pass by the occurrence if the elders would let the matter rest. Unhappily for them, and the peace of society, the prime movers and active

agents of these party measures, persevered with unremitting zeal, not only in their own justification, but in censuring, and treating with indifference and disrespect, those who could not countenance a system of **studied slander**, and consequent proscription and division in the society. An advancement in party measures produced its native fruit, great bitterness of spirit, destroying Christian love and social enjoyment, and laying waste the unity and harmony of religious society. Designing individuals, aspiring to become the chiefs of their party, or determined to support the dignity of their sires, were assiduously employed in writing and spreading anonymous publications, the cunning sophistry and subtle declamation of which tended to mislead the minds of the unwary, to foment discord, and fan into a flame the unmeaning war of conflicting prejudices, connected with non-essential opinions. These writers seemed ambitious to engraft on the themes of their controversy a new phraseology, and individuals in their public communications entwined certain mysterious views and expressions, "which dazzled but to blind." In many instances the ministry was prostituted to the exhibition of party views, and the most virulent declamation was indulged in against all who could not for conscience sake depart from

the simplicity of the truth, or mingle with those self-willed views intended to please a certain description of men.

In the progress of the Yearly Meeting of 1823 the advancement of party measures in a systematic public manner, began to be more fully developed. The accusers of Elias Hicks had found by experience, that their power was limited, and in order to strengthen their hands, and make their way more easy, a design appears to have been conceived to introduce into the society a standard of theological opinions, or in other words, a creed of doctrines like other professing Christians. As this was a delicate subject, in a society which had always borne a testimony against human creeds, great address was requisite to bring this measure into effect. The Meeting for Sufferings was deemed the most efficient medium through which to accomplish this desirable object. The minutes of that meeting were uniformly read, and approbated, or adopted in the Yearly Meeting: and it was no doubt supposed that if the substance of a creed could be insidiously embraced in those minutes, the Yearly Meeting in its customary condescension might pass the whole, and then the favourite document would be established.

Among the subjects that claimed the attention

of the Meeting for Sufferings in 1823, were certain anonymous controversial essays on theological subjects, over the signature of Paul and Amicus, printed in a periodical paper at Wilmington, in Delaware, which do not appear to have had any direct connexion with the society of Friends, but were merely the sentiments of individuals, for whom no religious society was responsible in that capacity, the author of the essays vindicating the doctrines of Friends, having stated, at the conclusion of the work as follows, viz. "And now I wish to be distinctly understood, that as my labours have been purely voluntary, so if in any case, I have in the least misrepresented the doctrines of our society, the blame ought to fall exclusively on Amicus, who only is responsible for the sentiments expressed in his essays." To correct the supposed aberrations of this unknown writer, appears to have become a grave concern of the Meeting for Sufferings; and in the fulfilment of this service they found a fit opportunity to insert on their minutes the substance of a favourite CREED for the acceptance of the Yearly Meeting. It is understood, many judicious members in the Meeting for Sufferings were entirely averse to any recognition of the controversy alluded to, or to taking any notice of it on their minutes. But power, and the means of

obtaining it, being preferred to unity and concord, this favorite measure was persevered in, but promptly *rejected* by the *Yearly Meeting*.

Considerable pains have been taken to produce an impression, that no creed was intended by the adoption of this document. But what can be more manifest, from the whole train of circumstances connected with its progress up to the Yearly Meeting, than that the promoters of this measure confided in it, as a standard to aid and assist them in their present purposes, and in future to become binding on the society as a test of doctrine. The arguments adduced in the Yearly Meeting for the support of the step taken on this subject, dismissed all doubts respecting the views of its promoters. It was strongly urged "that a society without principles was a non-entity," &c. the obvious conclusion from which was, if there was any application in the argument, that as a visible society we must have a visible standard. Well may the language of the apostle to the Galatians, be adopted; "Having begun in the spirit are ye now made perfect by the flesh!" We have seen the society of Friends progressing through several generations, without claiming any written CREED. They have constantly craved the guidance of that Divine spirit, a measure or manifestation of which is given



to all, to aid and assist them in their religious exercises in the worship of God, and to qualify rightly to maintain the rules of gospel order or Christian discipline in relation to one another. Consistently with this fundamental principle, the society of Friends never can adopt written rules of Faith. It would be receding from a *rock*, to lay a foundation on a *volcano*, which, according to the progress of its component elements, must sooner or later explode.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ORTHODOX PARTY PURSUING MEASURES TO SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS—UNCOMMON OCCURRENCES IN THE WESTERN MEETING.

The unequivocal decision of the Yearly Meeting, respecting the doctrinal views couched in the minutes of the Meeting for Sufferings, did not deter the authors from the unwearied prosecution of their designs for subjecting the society to their direction and control. They had already succeeded in organizing a party, and henceforth a line of entire discrimination was to be extended through all the different meetings, so as gradually to occupy every active station by those under their particular influence. If overseers or clerks were to be renewed in any of the meetings, every exertion, combined with the most unbending determination to carry their object, was practised. As *Friends* were passive or submitted for peace sake, these individuals advanced in systematizing their power, and in most of the

meetings in the city obtained the active ascendancy; although it is confidently believed they were by far the minor part in the different meetings.

Confiding in their own importance, and in that official strength which they from time to time acquired in the city meetings, by forcing their measures contrary both to the principles and practice of Friends, these individuals under the assumption of orthodoxy considered themselves in their different allotments to be "the meetings." In particular meetings composed of one hundred and twenty or one hundred and fifty families, the individuals of this party assumed to be "the meeting." In Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, as well as in the Yearly Meeting these still appropriated to themselves the title of "the meeting." Consistently with this assumption the general body of Friends became excluded from their counsels, and were not to be named on any business of importance nor entrusted with any service in society, which might interrupt the progress of their power. Faithful members who stood upright, and bore a testimony against the progress of systematic declension from the principle and practice of Friends, were not only treated with disrespect and contumely, but were actually proscribed, and in some instances frivo-

lous charges were made and slight offences distorted and magnified into sufficient importance to procure their disownment.

The exclusion of Friends, by the orthodox party, from places of trust, was a preliminary step to the disfranchisement of so many of them as might be necessary to intimidate and over-awe the rest, and upon the ruins of the rights and reputation of their fellow-members, more firmly to found their own darling power and domination. But the result has not answered expectation: schemes of selfish policy have sunk beneath their own weight. Truth endureth forever.

It would be unpleasant to advert to all the party measures pursued by those called orthodox in the city meetings, to crush their fellow-members, and more fully establish their own power. A few instances of uncommon procedure in the Western meeting will be noticed. In the 1st mo. 1825, the elders introduced into the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders a charge of unsoundness against Elias Hicks, with a view to obtain the sanction of that meeting to introduce the case into the Monthly Meeting. On deliberate consideration it was thought a case not belonging to that Meeting. No case, in fact, had been made out. It was only the construction of individuals, who might have a right to their own

views, but could not consistently attempt any legal process against a member of another Yearly Meeting in his absence. It was earnestly recommended, to dwell in patience in relation to the subject, and cherish moderation and charity towards one another, and faith and confidence in the Head of the church, who would in due time find ways and means to correct wrong things.

This view of the subject appeared to be concurred with, yet one of the elders introduced the subject to the next Monthly Meeting, on his own responsibility, without any regard to the conclusion or unity of the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders. It may be asked if this was consistent in itself, or if it accorded with the known practice of society? It was setting at nought the judgment and conclusion of the Preparative Meeting of ministers and elders. It was moving in disunity in a new case, not properly cognizable by either of the meetings. Every step was marked with disorder, division, and desolation of every good feeling. The Monthly Meeting being unexpectedly called to the consideration of the subject, and the case being new, under the plausible pretence of inquiry, a committee was appointed to investigate its merits. The result was, the greater proportion of the committee sustained the allegations of

the elders, three of whom being members of the committee, were thus virtually made judges in their own cause. The report was improperly entered upon the minutes in the way of information, but it was not acceptable to the meeting. Strenuous efforts were made to direct a copy of the report to Jericho Monthly Meeting: but the clerk at that time had too much integrity to proceed any further in the case, against the judgment of so many active members. While the report was under consideration an occurrence took place, which clearly exhibited the temper of the promoters of this measure. Israel Yarnall who had formerly been a member of the Western, and then belonged to the Northern District Monthly Meeting, being in attendance felt freedom to express his opinion respecting the subject of the report, in the following words: "If it be understood by the report,—if it set forth and declare, that Elias Hicks, the last time he was in this house, preached doctrines contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and contrary to our first or primitive Friends, being present at that time, I stand here as a witness that it is utterly false." This declaration acted like an electrical shock on the minds of the elders and a few others, several rising simultaneously to put him down. Their excitement produced not only unbecoming

disorder in the meeting, but induced two of the elders to make complaint to the overseers of the North meeting against Israel, for the liberty he had taken of expressing his opinion: and they entering into the views of the elders procured his disownment by the orthodox party in that Monthly Meeting; but Israel appealing to the Quarterly Meeting was reinstated without a dissenting voice.

This was certainly an uncommon case. From the first rise of the society, a free intercourse in the exercise of Christian fellowship had always obtained. Strangers have uniformly been encouraged to express their feelings and sentiments in meetings for business; agreeably to the Book of Advices, page 39: "In order to unite us more nearly one to another as members of the same body, and to strengthen each other's hands in promoting the cause of truth, it is recommended that Friends stand open to the leadings of the love of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; and when in that, they feel their minds drawn to sit with any of their neighbouring Monthly or Quarterly Meetings, that they attend thereto, and that such meetings as are so visited, receive such in the same love, and not look upon them as intruders: thus mutual help will be given and received amongst us." It may be asked, wherein was the

offence in the present case? Here was a Friend, who had lately been a member of the Western meeting, well known to be practically consistent with the principles of the society, simply giving his views in a calm and deliberate manner, on an essay of a report submitted to the deliberation of the meeting, and which contained the views of only a few individuals couched in ambiguous language, implying a general charge against Elias Hicks without specification or proof; which report the meeting at that time was not prepared to adopt. The reporters say: "We apprehend Elias Hicks expressed sentiments inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures, and the religious principles that our society has held from its first rise;" but do not state what those sentiments were, nor advance any evidence to sustain their apprehensions. Well might the friend qualify this declaration with the remark. "If the report intended to say," &c. that he as a witness could give his testimony to the contrary. But suppose an offence had been committed by the Friend's expression, it must have been against the Monthly Meeting. The meeting did not censure the Friend. It took no cognizance, nor gave any direction in the case. He was in the exercise of an accustomed privilege, under the protection of the meeting. Whence was it then, that any two or three members could take



all the power of the Monthly Meeting into their own hands, and pursue this Friend to disownment? It was undoubtedly on the principle of exclusive power, or that of a few orthodox members considering themselves "the meeting." The tender and feeling mind perceived that this transaction was a precursor to the prostration of the independence of the Western meeting.

Had these occurrences been only the effect of immediate excitement, compassion for the weaknesses and infirmities of humanity would plead an excuse: but when we see, year after year, the causes of disorder reduced to a system of action, the actors must in the view of all reasonable men be responsible for the consequence.

On the 10th of 1st mo. 1827, a renewed evidence was exhibited of the deep rooted prejudice against Elias Hicks remaining in the minds of his Philadelphia accusers. In the course of a religious visit, with the unity and approbation of his meetings at home, according to the order of society, he attended the Western meeting on the afternoon of first-day, which was crowded to overflowing, principally owing to the objections raised against him by his unceasing opponents, and partly to the public opposition made to him in Pine street meeting in the morning. An impression appears to have been made on:

the public mind that Elias Hicks was to be put down. The novelty of such an occurrence among a people always remarkable for their peaceable principles and demeanor, could not fail to draw a large concourse to the meeting. Although the meeting was so exceedingly crowded, and formed of such a variety of character, it maintained the accustomed appearance of propriety and quiet attention during the silent part, and while Elias was speaking, whose discourse appeared to give general satisfaction. After he sat down, one of the elders, evidently with the design of opposing Elias Hicks, attempted to give his views of what the society believed. This immediately excited a general murmur, overcoming the speaker's voice, and producing considerable unsettlement. Elias rose and with entreaty quieted the minds of the audience, and after a short communication from Willet Hicks the meeting concluded.

On fourth-day following in the Western Preparative Meeting, the elder whose communication, as has been stated, disturbed the meeting of first-day afternoon, under considerable excitement declared, "that he went to meeting with his life in his hand to bear a testimony for his Saviour," and strongly urged the necessity of inquiring into the cause of the late disorderly meeting, insinuating

that it was the effect of design. A committee of inquiry, consisting of this elder and others favourable to his views, was appointed in the Monthly Meeting, who reported, "that a large and disorderly concourse of people were brought together, at an unseasonable hour, and under circumstances that strongly indicated a design to pre-occupy the house to the exclusion of most of the members of our meeting, and to suppress in a riotous manner any attempt that might be made to maintain the doctrines and principles of our religious society, in opposition to the views of Elias Hicks." The committee moreover express a belief, "that the doctrines and sentiments of Elias Hicks greatly tend to the subversion of sound religious principles, and of the wholesome restraints of moral and domestic discipline."

From the elder's own declaration, and from the report of the committee it is acknowledged to have been a settled measure to oppose Elias Hicks, under the pretence of "maintaining the doctrines and principles of our religious society." In addition to the above acknowledgments, the facts connected with this subject, that transpired in the other meeting manifest a previously settled plan of public opposition to Elias Hicks by those called orthodox. It may be asked what right these individuals had to enter into such an

arrangement? Is there any discipline to warrant such an undertaking? The letter as well as the spirit of discipline, expressly forbids such proceedings. It was again secretly conspiring against the order and peace of society. It was a premeditated violation both of the principle and practice of the society, in disturbing the public worship, by attempting to introduce party views, wholly inappropriate and unconnected with any thing previously said. It was introducing the will of man, into what the society always considered to belong to the agency of the spirit. It was certainly the most distinct specimen of *Ranterism* that has occurred of latter time. How affecting to every sober mind, to see men *formerly* esteemed by many as of great moral worth, sacrificing their reputation and usefulness at the shrine of inveterate prejudice! But although these individuals were in the fault, they were the first to make complaint, and endeavoured to fix the odium of their own measures on others. We have already seen that their previous doings excited public attention, and they were undoubtedly the operative cause of bringing such numbers to see and hear Elias Hicks; and if they attempted in their own will to enforce an assumed power, is it any wonder that they should have fallen under the murmurs of a discerning public?

With what propriety could the disturbance be attributed to Elias Hicks? How was it possible *he* could influence the public to follow *him*? What plan could be effective to bring together so many individuals, to act as they did? The assembly, stimulated by the common propensity of curiosity in the human mind, came to see and to hear for themselves, and they acted as they did, by the excitement of the moment; and if the opposers of Elias Hicks had been awakened to their true situation they might have seen their own doings correcting them, and their backslidings reproving them!

Not satisfied with attributing the fruits of their own doings to the doctrines and sentiments of Elias Hicks, the orthodox party in the Western meeting, were now determined to enforce their views, and in the name of the meeting to adopt the report and direct it, (in conjunction with the former report that had been placed on the minute, two years before,) to be forwarded to Jericho Monthly Meeting, as matter of charge against Elias Hicks. These double charges were futile and unavailing in regard to their object. They fell harmless at the feet of Elias Hicks—but the violence with which they were sent forth, shook the Western Monthly Meeting to its foundation. Those called or-

thodox, having now obtained a clerk to suit their own views, did not hesitate to trample upon the judgment of one half of the meeting, to gratify their zeal and strengthen their power in the prosecution of their settled designs. This could not be done, but by entirely abandoning the principles of our religious association. The society always professed to rest on love, as a principle, and on unity or concurrence as a mode of action. Both were dispensed with in this case. A part of the meeting, acting under feelings of opposition against Elias Hicks, forcibly introduced a case wholly irrelevant to, and unconnected with the regular business of the Monthly Meeting. There is no discipline whatever that authorizes the entering of the name of a person, a member of another Yearly Meeting, on the minutes of a Monthly Meeting, or which can in such a case, sanction a judgment against him in his absence. Such a practice would lay waste all order and consistency. It is at variance with every principle of justice and equity.

The subject matter preferred against Elias Hicks, accusing him of holding "sentiments inconsistent with the scriptures, and the principles of Friends," was only the apprehension of some individuals, who were as liable to receive wrong impressions as others, and who could not with any propriety or justice enforce their views

as a final standard. We have already seen that the object of discipline was to regulate the practice of the members, but not to interfere with the subject of faith. In consonance with the quotation given from William Penn on this subject, (page ) in his preface to Robert Barclay's works, he says: "We never assumed to ourselves a faith or worship-making power. Our case is plain order, not articles of faith: and the discipline, of government, not of worship." The proper province of discipline, then, regards order and practice, and not articles of faith, or judging of its soundness toward God.

It may be asked, what rule of discipline Elias Hicks had broken? He came, in the love of the gospel and in the order of society, to visit the churches. What offence did he commit, that his service should have been interrupted? If he opened views that might be new to some, they were only offered in gospel affection, for consideration—none were compelled to embrace them. Truth is more powerful than error, why then should any be afraid of free inquiry? Why should it be attempted to limit the convictions of truth, or restrain liberty of conscience? We have seen, that the society purchased this liberty with its blood. How, then, can any now, turn round to their brethren and say, "Thus far have we gone,

and no further may we go. Our apprehensions are a legal standard, by which to try and judge thy opinions." Would not this reverse the rule of doing to others as we would they should do unto us? Would it not cancel the bond of Christian union, and lay a foundation for that spirit of intolerant domination, which would effectually suppress the energies of the society, and henceforth frustrate its usefulness?

But had the charge preferred against Elias Hicks, in the Western Monthly Meeting, been admissible, the decided opposition to its progress stood as an insurmountable barrier to any legal decision on it. The clerk of a meeting is appointed to serve the whole meeting, and not a part only. Where a new case is introduced, and half of the meeting is not prepared to act, it is evidently the duty of the clerk to suspend the case until a concurrent decision can take place. Where no concurrence can be obtained such new case ought to be dismissed. The exercise of a coercive power, in the administration of the discipline, over the consciences of any part of a meeting, never can be justified on any principle recognised by the society. Whenever it takes place, it must be the effect of party excitement and mere human power. Let us reverse the case, and suppose that the moderate part of the



Western Monthly Meeting, had proposed and insisted upon making a minute approving of Elias Hicks's service, and in opposition to the judgment of their brethren, had actually forwarded a copy of such a minute to Jericho Monthly Meeting. This would not have been a new case. It would have accorded with the common practice of society. What would have been the feelings of the other part under these circumstances? Would they not have said it was an assumed coercive power; that it was, on the part of the clerk, a violation of every obligation connected with that station; and that the messenger, carrying such a document to Jericho Monthly Meeting, bore in his hand an entire misrepresentation?—"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

There was no disposition, on the part of Friends, to take any step in the case. They wished to maintain the accustomed relations of society, without intermeddling with subjects not properly concerning them. They were not disposed to act on the current of floating opinions. They conceived that no question respecting doctrines was properly before them. They wished to preserve the peace and harmony of the meeting, by dismissing those extraneous questions, which never could be acted upon in unity, nor

tend to the edification of the members. The Monthly Meeting is the executive part of society respecting the *conduct* or *practice* of members: but it is not authorized to legislate on matters of faith, to circumscribe liberty of conscience, nor to interfere with private opinions, while the deportment is consistent with fundamental principles. But sentiments such as these, appeared to be treason in the view of the orthodox party; and for inculcating them, a Friend was denounced as a defender of infidelity. The minds of some of the leaders of this party, seemed indeed to be so heated with a misguided zeal, as to consider every moderate member unsound, and as having no right to be heard, nor was any attention paid to the united judgment of those who dissented from the measure.



## CHAPTER IX.

## CAUSES OF DIVISION IN PHILADELPHIA QUARTERLY MEETING.

The city meetings being more or less involved in the operation and effects of dividing causes, Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting could not be expected to escape from their general influence, as its active members were principally from the city meetings.

The whole strength of those calling themselves orthodox, was brought to bear on Green street Monthly Meeting through the medium of the Quarterly meeting, although the former meeting had given no just cause for hostility against it, by the infraction of any rule of discipline. The offence of that meeting consisted in having received a visit from Elias Hicks in their families, in the 12th mo. 1822, and in having endorsed his certificate, with an expression of unity and satisfaction with his services in that visit. All this was undoubtedly within the limits of the rights of any Monthly Meeting. That worthy

Friend came in the order of society, with certificates of the unity of his Monthly and Quarterly Meetings; and no valid objection appearing, he performed the service to general acceptance. It will be recollected that it was at this time that the association of the city elders attempted to interrupt the service of Elias Hicks, but failed to accomplish their purpose. From that period, in their eagerness to regain their power, they appear to have entertained an unquenchable jealousy, not only against the professed friends of Elias Hicks, but against all who would not implicitly support their views and measures. They felt that their influence and power were at stake, and appear unhappily to have determined that these must be supported, whatever might be the consequence. It is believed, however, that such an impression, although a natural fruit of their indiscreet rashness, was in a great measure groundless. There was no disposition on the part of the great body of Friends to censure these elders with severity. Had they returned with cordiality to the accustomed relations of society, the whole transaction would have been passed over, and soon forgotten. But the mortification of defeat, seemed to awaken every energy to pursue a selfish course, which evidently has placed them in a position very different from that

which they anticipated, and which probably was less acceptable to their feelings than any which they had imagined—that of being *left to themselves*.

When Green street Monthly Meeting was endorsing Elias Hicks's minute, some alteration being proposed, an elder of that meeting so far concurred with the minute, as to say that he "thought it would do." Yet after witnessing the unity of the meeting, and thus concurring with it, this elder joined with the others in writing and signing a paper already alluded to, impeaching the gospel ministry of Elias Hicks. In consequence of this injudicious step, this elder, after some time, was taken under care by the overseers of Green street Monthly Meeting; many of the members of said meeting being uneasy with his having acted in his official capacity in opposition to the expressed sense of his own meeting, of which, as we have seen, he was fully apprized. The object in taking him under the care of the meeting, through the medium of the overseers, was to induce him to make such explanations or concessions to the meeting, as might satisfy all that he was in unity with it. Being, however, a respectable person, and generally beloved, very little explanation would have been necessary to satisfy his friends. But perhaps influenced

or directed by his coadjutors, lest they also should come under censure, this elder declined the authority of the overseers in what he called his official duty as an elder, and, through the medium of Green street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, requested assistance of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in a case of difficulty. The official duty of elders has been noticed in Chapter VII, and consists in attending to such service as the Monthly Meeting may from time to time point out; and certainly, it could form no part of that service to counteract the expressed sense and judgment of the meeting.

The Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders appointed a committee to give such assistance to Green street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, as might seem to be necessary. Being a member of this committee, the writer of this work had an opportunity of witnessing the progress of this transaction, and deeply regretted the injudicious and unconstitutional measures pursued. When the committee met with Green street Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, *no specific case of difficulty was stated*, although it was apparent that some misunderstanding existed. It appeared to be expected, on the part of the elder taken under

the care of the overseers, that his fellow members of the Select Meeting would accuse him before the committee. They however simply stated their submission to the request of assistance, for the relief of the Friend proposing it, without having any thing further to say on the subject. Part of the committee strongly urged the members of the meeting, freely to express what they had against each other, that they might understand the whole case and give assistance accordingly. Another part, however, believed that if the meeting had no specific difficulty before them, the committee ought not to make one, and that all inquisitorial proceedings to create difficulty, were inconsistent with the duties of the committee. At last the elder under care, mentioned that the overseers of Green street Monthly Meeting had visited him for having signed the paper against Elias Hicks, an act which he had done in his official capacity, and which he had believed it his duty to do; and that, as one of the overseers was an elder, he considered the proceeding against him, as an infringement of the rights of the Select Meetings, and seemed to suppose he was not amenable to the overseers for his actions as an elder. With this view several of the committee seemed warmly to unite, and wished the whole case to be brought into such a shape, as to be judged of by the Select



members. Another part of the committee distinctly stated, that Select Meetings could not interfere with the business of any meetings for discipline, and that if any Friend in that meeting was under the care of overseers he must satisfy them, and not expect a refuge in the Select Meetings. The larger part of the committee, however, still urged their views, and from time to time, for more than a year, in vain attempted the accomplishment of such measures as might over-awe Green-Street Monthly Meeting, and establish the point *that elders were independent of overseers in the exercise of their official duties.*

As such evident indications of disunity with the meeting had been persisted in by this elder, Green Street Monthly Meeting, after due consideration, judged it expedient to release him from his service in that capacity. But as he was a Friend much esteemed by the members of that meeting, no further censure was passed upon him, nor was any infringement made of his rights as a member. He was simply released from the station or service of elder. The committee of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders then made a report, which in substance stated, that "Green Street Monthly Meeting, had in a summary way, taken the business out of their hands." This report was objected to, by part of the com-

mittee, on the ground that no specific case had ever been before them, and because the overseers of Green street Monthly Meeting had the elder under care, previous to the appointment of the committee. But although two of the committee could not concur with the report, it was signed on behalf of the whole, notwithstanding the two dissenting members urged a contrary course; and the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders recorded it, and directed the substance of it to be laid before the general Quarterly Meeting, as a remonstrance against Green street Monthly Meeting.

Here, it ought to be distinctly understood, there was a direct violation of discipline on the part of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders. So far from having any power to accuse a Monthly Meeting to the Quarter, the discipline expressly declares, “None of the said Meetings of Ministers and Elders are *in anywise to interfere* with the business of any meeting for discipline.” With this express prohibition before them, the dominant part of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in the plenitude of their power, became instrumental in leading the general Quarterly Meeting into a direct infraction of discipline, by receiving on minute a charge against one of its Monthly Meetings, through an

unauthorized medium, relating to a subject exclusively within its own jurisdiction and control. Neither the Select nor General Quarterly Meeting had any thing to do with the decision of Green street Monthly Meeting in relation to the release of its elders.

Select Meetings, as has been shown, took their rise from the private conference of those in the ministry, who at first voluntarily met to encourage each other in a strict adherence to their respective gifts, and in a conversation and practice consistent with a dispensation in the ministry. Afterwards Monthly Meetings were encouraged to nominate two or more judicious, solid Friends to sit with the ministers, under the denomination of elders, as it was expected they would be exemplary and might afford suitable care and advice to those young in the ministry. In the formation of Select Meetings they had no disciplinary powers. All the power vested in any of the members of those meetings, as such, arose from their weight of character, and that mutual counsel and pious persuasion which is congenial with Christian love and religious care. Individually the members were subject to the common discipline, and it was never intended they should assume a distinct order, or have any other superiority in the society, than what arose from their

dedication and faithfulness to fundamental principle. The regulations, subsequently introduced into Select Meetings, in the form of answering certain queries, were designed to keep alive the primitive concern in regard to the exemplary deportment of the members. Expressly prohibited from interfering with disciplinary subjects in relation to the public body, it appears strange that any elder should ever have thought himself independent of the Monthly Meeting to which he belonged, or that any Select Meeting should have attempted to over-awe, control, or arraign any meeting of discipline, or to bring itself forward, as a distinct body, to interrupt the order and harmony of society.

The remonstrance of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and the memorial of the elder released by Green street Monthly Meeting, unconstitutionally and forcibly brought into the general Quarterly Meeting, by the orthodox party, through the agency of a clerk submissive to their views, presented a distinct specimen of this extraordinary arrogation. This singular assumption may find a parallel in the time of the declension of the primitive churches, but could not pass unobserved, nor be submitted to, in the nineteenth century. Great exertions were made, by addressing the af-

fections on behalf of the venerable Friend, to convert his memorial into an appeal case. But it was only a private remonstrance against his Monthly Meeting, without the knowledge or consent of that meeting, and according to disciplinary practice it was not entitled to be heard until it had been previously examined by a committee. It followed close on the remonstrance from the Select Meeting, and both were placed upon minute, as a pressing call for the appointment of a committee to go down to Green street Monthly Meeting, with the charges which had been preferred against it by the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders.

This interference of the Select Meeting with the general Quarter, and with Green street Monthly Meeting, excited unexpected alarm, and the opposition manifested against the measure was so great as to prevent the intended proceeding in the case at that time. The clerk, however, contrary to the expressed judgment of the larger part of the meeting, placed the two remonstrances on minute. At the next Quarterly Meeting a transposition of the two minutes appeared to have been effected. The memorial of the Elder was first called up, although it was second on the minutes, with the expectation, it was supposed, that affection for the venerable and respected Friend, would induce the meeting

to recognise his application as an appeal case, and would procure a committee to reinstate him. But this device failed to accomplish the desired purpose, and after referring the two cases, from Quarter to Quarter, unexampled scenes of confusion and disorder being the consequence, they were referred to the Yearly Meeting of 1827, for its decision.

Such are the painful results of a deviation both from principle and practice, in the transaction of religious concerns. When the Select Quarterly Meeting extended conciliatory counsel and advice, through its committee, to the select members of Green street meeting, their functions ceased in relation to the case. Every other step was mere assumption, under the excitement of party feeling, and tended to involve the society in great confusion, disturbing the minds of many goodly Friends, and bringing reproach on the way of truth.

The temper and disposition elicited by the collision of party views, evidenced a sorrowful departure from the spirit and practice of the gospel, and exposed Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, for several years, as a scene of unseemly excitement and unkind altercation. Orthodoxy often assumed its wonted supercilious haughtiness, pouring forth general charges of infidelity and unsound-

ness, and at times denouncing and proscribing individuals, not suffering the meeting to be a protection to private character or individual rights. The progress of time increased that flaming zeal of party feeling, which was destroying the benefits of religious association, and laying waste the rights and liberty of society.

In the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in the eighth month, 1826, a second committee was appointed, specially to advise and assist the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders of Green street Monthly Meeting. This appointment was grounded on a small abatement made in the answers to the queries, received from said Preparative Meeting, respecting unity, although as great deficiencies were acknowledged in the answers received from at least one other Preparative Meeting. This committee reported the ministry unsound, on the accusation of one individual, and against the evidence of all the remaining part of the meeting, and contrary to the official answers to the queries, on that subject.

This report was adopted by the active rulers in the Quarterly Meeting, and no doubt it was a settled point to displace the ministering Friend referred to in the report, or to disown his ministry; a disposition to do which was on several

occasions manifested in a very unseemly manner. In the face of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders the expressions of this Friend were disingenuously wrested and perverted so as to make them mean entirely different from the intentions of the speaker, and the glosses and construction of his accusers were insisted on, in an overbearing and unreasonable manner, as the identical language uttered by him. This transaction dissipated all religious weight from the Select Meeting, and entirely frustrated its intention and benefits, and forever burst that bond of union, which in former days had been a joy and a rejoicing.

In the progress of these trying circumstances, Green street Monthly Meeting, having appointed a committee to take into consideration the relative standing of the elders belonging to that meeting, in consequence of continued opposition of two women elders, not only to particular members, but to the Monthly Meeting, and having weightily deliberated on the subject, came to the judgment that the service of those two Friends had ceased as elders of the meeting, and accordingly they were released. Those Friends offered to the General Quarterly Meeting, a written communication, stating, in general terms, that they were aggrieved by the proceedings of Green



street Monthly Meeting: without specifying in what respect they apprehended themselves aggrieved.

A strong effort was made in the Quarterly Meeting, by the orthodox members, to make this an appeal case, although a similar application involving the infraction of good order, had been rejected, and with its collateral remonstrance from the Select Quarter, referred to the Yearly Meeting, as the only way to relieve the Quarterly Meeting from questions it could never agree upon. Such however, was the strange inconsistency of these members, that they again attempted to renew the same question, which nothing but the condescension of Friends had induced them to submit to the decision of the Yearly Meeting, hoping thereby to regain peace and harmony. Yet before the Yearly Meeting arrived, at which the judgment of the body was to be had, a similar case was brought forward to the Quarterly Meeting, again to produce its natural fruits—discord and confusion. The representatives and other members of Green street Meeting attempted to explain what the alleged grievance was; but this was artfully objected to, on the plea, that as the Quarterly Meeting was not officially informed of the nature and merits of the case, it had no right, as a Quarterly Meet-

ing, to know any thing about them. A powerful argument indeed, to obtain a committee of inquiry into a case, not officially or legally before the meeting, and one over which it was well known the Quarterly Meeting had no jurisdiction.

Such, however, was the policy of the orthodox party and their unbending perseverance on this occasion, that they obtained a committee to inquire into the supposed grievance.

This committee without waiting to report to the Quarterly Meeting what the alleged grievance was, and to receive renewed instructions in the case, immediately transformed the memorial into an appeal, and requested Green street Monthly Meeting to furnish the minutes of their proceedings in relation to it. Green street Monthly Meeting very properly declined countenancing such an extraordinary assumption on the part of a committee only nominated to inquire into an *alleged* grievance, and not to take into their control the power of both the Quarterly and Monthly Meeting. This committee, however, reported to the Quarterly Meeting, that the proceedings of Green street Meeting in relation to these two Friends should be annulled, although the case, in this point of view, had never been before the Quarterly Meeting, nor had any power

been given to the committee by the Quarter, further than to inquire into the nature of the alleged grievance. It must be observed, that the proper duties of this committee extended no further than to state to the Quarterly Meeting in what this grievance consisted. What right could they have to decide that it was a grievance, and give judgment accordingly, without knowing whether the Quarterly Meeting would consider the release of those Friends from the station of elders in that light. The individuals who appointed this committee, in the name of the Quarterly Meeting, sanctioned their proceedings, and thereby assumed the principle that committees have a right to exceed the instructions of the meeting appointing them to service, which was equivalent to, placing in their hands indefinite power without legal restraint. When objections were made to these proceedings by members from Green street Monthly Meeting, it was declared "they were not to be heard."

The judiary powers of the Quarterly Meeting were fast absorbing into the mere dictum of a few orthodox leaders, and few if any transactions afterwards, could properly be said to be the acts of the Quarterly Meeting, according to original organization, or in the legitimate exercise of its functions. Instead of concurrent

feeling governing in the deliberations of the Quarterly Meeting, an exclusive system of policy was adopted, the few to rule the many.

In the 11th mo. 1826, a proposal originated in the women's Quarterly Meeting, to visit the Monthly Meetings, which was brought into the men's meeting and under present circumstances was discouraged, on the ground, that it was believed, that no benefit would be likely to arise from any party measure in the then convulsed state of society. It was not distinctly stated what was the specific object of the intended visitation. It was a voluntary offer of certain individuals to go down to the Monthly Meetings under the general guise of religious concern. If this concern had been of the pure and proper kind, it would have been under the influence of love in its origin, its means, and its end. Force and constraint could not have entered into the means of its adoption. This subject was contested several hours in the men's meeting, and the general voice was so much opposed to the measure, that the clerk emphatically declared he could not proceed in the nomination of a committee of men to join with the women in this measure. A person, however, whom he had previously called to the table as an assistant, being less scrupulous, undertook (the clerk being absent for a short time) to take down names, but the opposi-

tion was so great that he could not fully accomplish his purpose, and after some time the meeting adjourned till next day. During the interval the clerk appears to have been relieved from his scruples, as next day he complied without hesitation with the wishes of the orthodox party.

When the committee that was appointed met to ascertain the object in view, two Friends named on it were treated with great indifference, and when the committee met to agree on a report those Friends did not receive notification, and at the next Quarterly Meeting their names on the nomination list were supplied by orthodox members. This committee reported attention to their appointment, and expressed their belief that it had taken place in best wisdom. They were continued without any disciplinary object, other than the influence of their counsel and advice, on the general ground of brotherly care. The Quarterly Meeting could confer no other power on this committee. There had been no regular case brought before the Quarterly Meeting, to bring into action any disciplinary power in relation to any of the Monthly Meetings. There was no specific charge against any Monthly Meeting. There was no appeal case to call forth the judiciary powers of the Quarterly Meeting. There were no obligatory instructions

from the Yearly Meeting compelling the attention of the Quarter. The legitimate functions of the Quarterly Meeting being exclusively judiciary, it cannot act with any disciplinary power, but when cases are regularly brought before it, either by a Monthly Meeting or by the Yearly Meeting. It possesses in itself no legislative or executive functions. It can only decide on cases laid before it, according to the regular order prescribed in the discipline. Its decisions are referred, either to a Monthly or Yearly Meeting as the case requires. This committee, therefore, could not, according to discipline, have any power but that arising from fellow feeling or brotherly care in regard to any Monthly Meeting within the limits of the Quarter.

In the face of these incontestible facts, it is asked, upon what principle either of justice or discipline did this committee report to the Quarterly Meeting in the 5th mo. 1827, that Green street Meeting should be laid down, and its members attached to the Northern District Monthly Meeting? Or how could the Quarterly Meeting consistently, adopt this report so much at variance not only with all its own functions, but also with those of the committee? Such a transaction could not take place on any known

principle connected with the administration of discipline in the society. It was merely the doings of orthodoxy, destitute of all sanction or effect as it regards the government of society.

The truth is, Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting was at this period virtually extinct. After the progress of several years' disunion, the forcible nomination of the committee against the voice of the greater number of the members may be considered to have terminated the association as regarded original principles. The principle of condescension and concurrence was not only openly abandoned, but measures were pursued, by deception and absolute power, which went directly to extinguish the rights of individuals, and the liberty of religious society. Was it not through a union of deception and unrestrained power, under the pretence of religious concern, that this committee was forcibly nominated, that it might in some way lay hold on Green street Monthly Meeting? While professing to spread its mantle of love over the Monthly Meetings, was not the real object of this committee to overawe, or crush Green street Monthly Meeting? In the 14th or 15th century this kind of policy is understood to have borne the designation of "pious fraud."

This last appointment made up three commit-

tees, the powers of which were directed to the proscription of Green street Monthly Meeting. One was appointed in the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders under a constructed charge of unsoundness in the ministry; a second was appointed in the General Quarter to inquire into the grievance of the elders who had been released, and the third, consisting of the general committee now forcibly appointed, was intended to take a wider range than the designs formed might be more certainly compassed. What was the transgression or delinquency of Green street Meeting, that the Quarterly Meeting should for years have been setting itself in array against it? The sum total of that meeting's offence, consisted in receiving the religious labours of an approved minister coming in gospel order amongst them, and in having subsequently released one male and two female elders from their station, in consequence of their settled disunity with the meeting.

What is there in either of those cases inconsistent with the functions and duties of any Monthly Meeting? They were local concerns, over which the Quarterly Meeting had no control, as they did not come within the limits of its judiciary powers.



The true ground of all those proceedings, was the offence taken by the illegal association of elders, who could not prevent the visit of Elias Hicks to the families of Green street Meeting, and who considered the subsequent release of some of the elders of that meeting as a general censure on themselves. To sustain their pretensions, and justify their claims to the power they had assumed, the hue and cry of unsoundness was raised, to divert the attention of beholders, and cover the true cause of their irregular and selfish procedure. Every step taken in a dereliction from principle involved them in deeper difficulty, until their wayward course placed them in a position, distinct from the unity of the body, in the exercise of its disciplinary functions. Abandoning the exercise of condescending principle, and the consistency and effectiveness of general concurrence in transacting the affairs of the society, those calling themselves orthodox have become an isolated party, which by its own acts has separated itself from the body, and has produced a consequent revolution in regard to the extent, and the object of its power.

The members of Green street Meeting having long experienced the hostile temper and disposition of the ruling orthodox party in Philadelphia

Quarter, and seeing that no limits of discipline appeared to restrain their resentment and designs against the quiet, the harmony, and the independence of their meeting; and perceiving that the rights of Green street Meeting were no longer respected, and that every advantage resulting from their connexion with Philadelphia Quarter was gone, a proposition was made by Samuel Noble in the 2d mo. Quarter, 1827, that a conference might be had by a committee of the Quarterly Meeting and Green street Monthly Meeting, with a view of taking into consideration the expediency of Green street Monthly Meeting connecting itself with Abington or some other Quarterly Meeting. This proposal, reasonable as it was, and manifesting the disposition of Green street Friends to avoid extremes, and promote harmony in the society, was treated with great indifference and contempt, by those self-important individuals who vainly conceived their views and opinions ought to be obligatory on every department of society, and direct its measures to the fulfilment of their desires. Subsequent events have fully demonstrated the deception which these persons practised on themselves, as well as on others, and may stand as a memento to future aspirants, how in their desire to control the concerns of religious society, they ven-

ture to disregard the feelings, and rashly trample on the liberties of their brethren possessing the same rights with themselves.

## CHAPTER X.

REVIEW OF THE DISCIPLINARY PRINCIPLE OF FRIENDS, WITH REMARKS ON THE ALLEGED LAYING DOWN OF GREEN STREET MONTHLY MEETING BY PHILADELPHIA QUARTERLY MEETING.

In recurring to the formation of the society of Friends, and the introduction and application of disciplinary rules, we must perceive that the whole structure rests on the principle of love. The whole disciplinary power in the society is the operation of love drawing the minds of the members into oneness of feeling, and producing general concurrence of action respecting any subject or case, that may occur in accordance with the rules and regulations found to be promotive of consistent order. The divine gift or spiritual principle, is the same in its nature in every mind, and all who are gathered into it will come to have a feeling and sense of what the judgment of truth is, in particular cases. Every mind may not see with equal clearness; but the

judgment of truth, being unfolded in its own wisdom and gentleness will be owned by all who have any spiritual sensibility, and will produce a general concurrence. Those individuals who are most centred to the principle of truth may see with more readiness or more clearness than others of their brethren, and become organs of expression in regard to what is best to be done in particular cases: but they do not hereby acquire any separate or superior power over their fellow members in the discharge of a duty which, for the time, only renders them the servants of all. The expression of the feelings and views of a few individuals on a subject in a meeting for business may be sufficient when the views expressed meet with the unity and concurrence of the members silently assenting to them. It is not, however, consistent with the nature of the subject before us, to suppose that the active individuals, or speaking members, have any more power in discipline than silent members. It is not the expression or speech that governs in deciding on any case, but the union and concurrence of the members. Those who are denominated the active or weighty part of a meeting, are so, not from any inherent or distinct superiority in themselves, but because through dedication and faithfulness they become instrumental in opening

the current of unity, which spreading over a meeting gives a sanction and decision to cases under consideration. Cases are decided by the weight of concurrence arising from a conviction of the justness and correctness of the views exhibited by active members; which reaching the principle of truth in the minds of their fellow-members produce a general feeling of union in the one principle of love.

The weight of the active part then will be in proportion to the concurrence and unity of the body. Active members standing separate from the unity of the body cannot have either religious weight, or usefulness. It would be evidently inconsistent for active members to arrogate to their views, that weight which alone consists in the unity of the body arising from the operation of religious principle. In a private capacity, every one has a right to his own views; but as members of disciplinary meetings, the views exhibited are the property of the meeting, and that view only which obtains general concurrence has weight to give decision. All religious weight virtually resides in the principle of truth, and can only be partaken of by individuals, and diffused over meetings, by attention and faithfulness to the operation of this principle. From this view it is difficult to conceive how any individuals can claim an exclusive right to religious

weight, and predicate, on their own opinions, a paramount power in discipline. The mere assumption is at variance with every grace of the spirit of truth, as well as every principle and obligation binding together religious society. Individuals who become so tenacious of their own views, as to enforce their adoption without the consent, concurrence, and unity of the body, at once cancel the bond of religious union, depart from the foundation principle of love and condescension, and attempt to supersede the government of religious principle by human power.

These views are not the suggestions of a reckless libertinism reaching forth to novelty and change, but are self-evident in the very nature of the subject, and entirely accord with the concurrent testimony and practice of Friends. In the book of advices put forth by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in the year 1808, to which we have already referred, it is distinctly stated, "It is no man's learning, nor artificial acquirements; it is no man's riches, nor greatness in this world; it is no man's eloquence and natural wisdom, that makes him fit for government in the church of Christ: all his endowments must be seasoned with the heavenly salt, and his gift pass through the fire of God's altar, a sacrifice to his praise and honour, that as self being baptized into death the

gift may be used in the power of the resurrection of the life of Jesus in him.

“Our ancient Friends and their faithful successors to the present day, have earnestly laboured to turn the attention of all to this pure spirit; knowing from experience that it is the means appointed by God for effecting our salvation, and the only foundation of all true religion and worship. As by this we have been led into divers testimonies which have distinguished us from most other professors of the Christian name, we fervently desire that all our members may walk by the same rule and mind the same thing; thus every one filling his place in the body we shall grow up into Him in all things who is the head, even Christ.”

From every view we can take on this subject, disciplinary power rests not in individuals, but in the body concurrently acting in love and condescension to promote the general interests of religious society. The term power, on this subject, does not embrace any coercion, but the constraints of love. It is the principle of love ministering to general good, seeking to restrain, by tender persuasion, offending members, and to restore them into the feeling of love, and the unity of the body; and where this labour proves ineffectual to restore, the same love constrains to



bear testimony against that which is evil, inducing, at the same time, a care to leave unreturning offenders under a conviction of that love which through the body seeks their restoration. Where the body thus travails in love to fulfil the law of Christ, it is believed there are few offenders but will own the purity of truth's testimony, and be satisfied that their own doings have separated them from church fellowship.

The disciplinary principle is one in its nature, although it is brought to act on different objects, or in different modifications in the several meetings. Preparative Meetings receive reports from the overseers, and prepare such business as is necessary to lay before the Monthly Meetings, which are denominated such, because of their being held every month at a stated time, and consist mostly of the members within a given district. This meeting being open to all the members belonging to it, and all being on equality respecting rights and privileges, it seems to form a community within itself, and, so far as respects the practice of the members, possesses within itself efficient or executive functions to administer care agreeably to the regulations of the discipline. With the exception of disinterested referees in cases of appeal, and the reception of counsel and advice in cases of a difficult nature, Monthly

Meetings seem as if they might answer all the purposes of a religious community, in regard to the management of their local concerns.

To promote the general interest and welfare of the society at large, it has been deemed advisable to institute Quarterly Meetings, composed of two or more Monthly Meetings, and of a number of Quarters to form a Yearly Meeting. The object of this arrangement is to produce additional advantages to Monthly Meetings without diminishing any of their rights and privileges. Quarterly Meetings have no powers but what are specifically described. They have a judiciary power in cases of appeal which come before the meeting, in a manner distinctly specified. They afford advice to Monthly Meetings, that ask it, in a certain form, respecting any difficulty arising from a difference of views on any particular subject; and they stand as a medium of communication between the Monthly and Yearly Meetings in regard to answering the queries, and forwarding any new proposal from the Monthly Meetings, or any new decision from the Yearly Meeting to them. The powers of the Quarter are of a conventional nature, for specific purposes agreed on by the Monthly Meetings, entering into the union or relation of a Quarterly Meeting, for mutual ad-

vantages. Monthly Meetings, in entering into this relation or agreement to hold a Quarterly Meeting, do not compromit any of their functions, far less their existence as separate and independent meetings, but they unite for mutual advantage, according to the nature and use of those meetings.

A. B. and C. are three distinct independent Monthly Meetings, and agree, with the consent of a Yearly Meeting, to form, as one of its constituent branches, a Quarterly Meeting, for the common advantage of the Monthly Meetings which compose it. They were severally, independent Monthly Meetings, previous to their union, they remain independent during the union, and will continue so although their connexion as a Quarter should be dissolved, and they severally left to seek the advantages of a Quarterly Meeting in an association with some other meetings. No two of these Monthly Meetings, can by any principle in their association, arbitrarily dissolve or annihilate the third. If A. and B. are dissatisfied with the procedure of C., and from experience find it not to their credit or advantage to remain in communion as formerly, they may dispense with the fellowship of C. as a branch of the Quarterly Meeting, in the manner of releasment from the

existing obligations of mutual compact. But they cannot justly annihilate C. and incorporate the members with either A. or B. The Monthly Meeting C. being released from its agreement with A. and B. as a component branch of the Quarterly Meeting, will revert to its original position previous to its union with A. and B. in the capacity of a Quarterly Meeting.

From the premises laid down in relation to the nature and operation of the disciplinary principle of Friends, and in regard to the legal constitution of meetings for discipline, it must appear self-evident that the proceedings under the name of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting against Green street Monthly Meeting were without just reason, order or sanction, and consequently null and void.

From the narrative of simple facts, it is undeniable, that the active agents of a party called orthodox, entirely abandoned the disciplinary principle of Friends, which can only operate by love, condescension, and mutual concurrence. They reached forth the hand of force over the heads of the brethren, members of the same body or visible church, and instead of dwelling in the unity of the spirit which is the bond of peace, they from time to time systematized human power, and openly declared war against all who

would not join their ranks. All the devices and transactions that have taken place, in the party zeal of man, must remain forever separated from and foreign to the government of the true church. The formation of the orthodox into an isolated, active party of an exclusive character, in the bosom of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, produced a state of convulsion and anarchy, which entirely destroyed the efficiency of the Quarterly Meeting, and utterly disqualified it for any legal action whatever. But if the Quarterly Meeting had retained its judiciary functions, there was nothing before it to act upon in relation to Green street Monthly Meeting. There was no deficiency in the regular order of that meeting. It was the most quiet, most consistent and exemplary of any meeting in the city. There was no regular matter or subject, according to the specified duties of a Quarterly Meeting, at any time before it, in respect to Green street Monthly Meeting. There was neither legal object nor power to act, until Green street Monthly Meeting had dissolved its connexion with Philadelphia Quarter, and then all that could possibly be done in the case, was to acquiesce in the act of that Monthly Meeting, which declared that its connexion with the Quarter, as a constituent branch, was dissolved. Green

street Monthly Meeting, having for a length of time been deprived of all the advantages of a Quarterly Meeting, through the agency of an irreconcilable party, whose dominant power had usurped the legal authority, believed that the existing state of society required, that this Monthly Meeting should be connected with a Quarterly Meeting in the sober exercise of its functions, and accordingly, that meeting applied, and was received into connexion with Abington Quarter. The propriety of the measure, if at all disputed, must be at issue only between the two Quarterly Meetings, and not between Green street Monthly and Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, and could therefore only be decided by the Yearly Meeting.

Green street Monthly Meeting being received as an integral branch of Abington Quarter, undoubtedly possessed all the rights and independence inherent in any other Monthly Meeting within the union of the Yearly Meeting. How was it possible, on any valid ground, for Philadelphia Quarter to affect the independence of Green street Monthly Meeting, more than that of any other.

We have already seen there is no such power in any Quarterly Meeting to lay down a Monthly Meeting without the consent or concurrence of

its members. How could Philadelphia Quarter, then, reach Green street Monthly Meeting, which under a conviction of the incapacity of that meeting in its disorganized state, to exercise the functions of a Quarterly Meeting, had placed itself in connexion with another. From every view possible to take of the case in connexion with the principles of Friends, the whole proceedings of the orthodox party remain nugatory.

To corroborate the representations exhibited respecting the proceedings against Green street Monthly Meeting, by the active agents in Philadelphia Quarter, a statement of facts published by direction of Green street Monthly Meeting is here subjoined, as follows:

*At an adjourned Monthly Meeting of Friends, held at Green street, Philadelphia, the 4th of 10th month, 1827.*

A verbal Committee having been appointed at our Monthly Meeting in the second month last, to prepare a statement of our grievances in order to be laid before the Yearly Meeting, produced at a succeeding meeting a document which was read and approved; and the subject again claiming the consideration of this meeting, it was on

the 20th. ult. submitted to a committee for re-examination, with instructions to make such amendments and additions as more recent occurrences render expedient and submit the same for the consideration of an adjourned meeting. The following statement produced by them being now read and deliberately considered was united with and directed to be recorded on our minutes. It was referred to the Committee to make such further disposition thereof as may appear most advisable.

Extracted from the minutes.

JOSEPH WARNER, Clerk.

#### A STATEMENT, &c.

Believing that the present affecting state of our religious society demands that the facts which have been essentially its procuring cause, so far as Green street Monthly Meeting stands connected therewith, should be faithfully developed; and that the time has fully arrived when such an exposition should be made, for the justification of the character of our Monthly Meeting, and for the purpose of fairly exhibiting its proceedings, that all may judge of them as they really exist: this Monthly Meeting conceives it has become its duty to record the following statement.



When the Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia consented to the establishment of Green street Monthly Meeting, the Discipline which had been adopted by the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, was consequently admitted to be the rule which should regulate the operation of both the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings. In this book of Discipline is the following clause in relation to Friends who may be concerned to visit, as ministers, the different meetings of Friends, out of the limits of this Yearly Meeting, viz.

“Agreed, that when any Friend is religiously concerned to make a visit to the meetings of Friends beyond the limits of this Yearly Meeting, and has obtained a certificate for that purpose from the Monthly Meeting of which he or she is a member, that the concern be also laid before the respective Quarterly Meeting for its concurrence and endorsement,” &c. *Page 66.*

With such a certificate, and so endorsed, a ministering Friend applied, in the 12th month 1822, to visit the families of this meeting, which service being nearly completed, he attended our Monthly Meeting, and on presenting his certificate an endorsement expressive of our unity with his Gospel labours amongst us, was, without a dissenting voice, directed to be made on it. After which an elder of our meeting, in his official cap-

acity, in conjunction with several others, elders of the other city meetings, (who at this time and previously composed a self-constituted meeting of elders, concerting measures out of the order of society,) signed a paper which impeached the gospel ministry of the said Friend, and thereby *counteracted* and *arraigned* the judgement come to by this meeting: although this Friend, our elder, was present when the endorsement was made, and so far concurred with it as to observe, when a proposition was made to alter it, that he “thought it would do.”

We are thus particular in stating these circumstances, because we conscientiously believe that the sorrowful dissensions amongst us, have in great part grown out of this combination of elders.

Next in order we think it right to state, that in consequence of this and other acts of opposition to the Monthly Meeting, the aforesaid elder was taken under care of the meeting, through the medium of its overseers. After which this Friend, in connexion with several others, parties in the question at issue, (who together composed the greater part of our Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders,) requested assistance of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders in an abstract unspecified case: which request was acceded to, and, in the 11th month, 1823, a committee was

was appointed. This committee was continued in service more than a year. Within that interval, and after continued but unavailing efforts to effect a reconciliation, a conclusion was come to by this Monthly Meeting, to release the aforesaid Friend from the station of an elder. The committee then made a report, in which they complained that Green street Monthly Meeting had, in a summary way, taken the business out of their hands. But this allegation, we conceive, is not well founded. Because, as before observed it can be proved by the Friend's own acknowledgment, that the meeting by its overseers, had his case previously under care; and moreover the aforesaid committee had no case specified, as the Discipline directs.

We object to these proceedings for the following reasons: viz.

1. Because a considerable proportion of the most influential and active members of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, being of the number of those that composed the self-constituted meeting of elders before alluded to, were parties in the case, and consequently, it could not be expected that they would adjudge against their own cause.

2. Because the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders was not united in making the request And

3. Because those individuals who made the request were parties in the case.

The next thing we notice is the circumstance that in the 11th month, 1824, the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders presented a remonstrance to the general Quarterly Meeting in the case of the Friend before alluded to, which arraigned Green street monthly Meeting before that meeting.

In addition to this, a memorial was presented by the Friend himself, complaining of the conduct of our Monthly Meeting in his case. This memorial was read by the clerk immediately after the remonstrance, without observing the usual order of society, which has been to appoint a committee to examine all unofficial documents, previously to their being read: the clerk thus taking on himself the responsibility of introducing into the meeting *a complaint from one party*, which now appears on record against us. These papers were admitted, or rather forced on the minutes of the general Quarterly Meeting, contrary to the judgment expressed by a large part of said meeting.

In reference to these transactions we remark,  
1. That the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in taking up the case, or in making any representation to the general Quarterly Meeting

in relation to the subject, and more especially by its arraignment of our Monthly Meeting or its proceedings, committed a direct infraction upon that part of our Discipline which declares, that “none of the said meetings of Ministers and Elders are *in anywise* to interfere with the business of *any meeting for Discipline.*” Page 67.

2. The general Quarterly Meeting, by entering this remonstrance on its minutes, and by acting upon it, sanctioned this violation of our Discipline, and thus became a party against one of its branches, and by that act, virtually absolved Green street Monthly Meeting from further accountability to it as a superior meeting.

3. By admitting the memorial of our elder, as aforesaid, the Quarterly Meeting sanctioned and became accessory to a violation of the first principles of gospel order, recognized by our Discipline, viz. that endeavours be used by the party offended to obtain a reconciliation with the party offending, previously to any charge being preferred: agreeably to the injunction of Christ, “If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone,” &c. (*See introduction to Discipline.*) This important requisition of the Discipline was neglected by our elder, who did not so much as inform our Monthly Meeting of his intention to arraign it before the Quarterly Meeting.

4. The Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders by coming to a judgment to make a remonstrance against our Monthly Meeting, *constituted itself a party against us*. This fact was so far admitted by the general Quarterly Meeting, that when the case was referred, in the 5th mo. 1826, to the Yearly Meeting, and a committee was about to be appointed to represent it there a decision was come to, that the members of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders should be privileged to *name out of that body one half of the said committee*, and that the members of Green street Monthly Meeting might name the other half.

5. The same parties who composed the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and who had presented the aforesaid remonstrance, again, in the general Quarterly Meeting, *sat in judgment against our Monthly Meeting*, and were the active men in forcing the measure.

In the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in the 8th month, 1826, a second committee was appointed, specially to *advise and assist* our Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders. This appointment was grounded upon a small abatement made in the answers to the queries received from said Preparative Meeting, although as great deficiencies were acknowledged

in the answers received from at least one other Preparative Meeting.

This committee reported the ministry unsound, on the accusation of one individual, and against the evidence of all the remaining part of the meeting, and contrary to the official answers to the queries. This report was adopted by the Quarterly Meeting.

On the same evidence, the committee *identified as an offender*, a minister who then was, and continues to be *in unity* with the Monthly Meeting, and, excepting his accuser, with the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and *summoned him to attend before part of their number*, without the permission of the said Preparative Meeting.

Respecting these measures we make the following observations.

1. In case of deficiencies acknowledged in the official answers to the queries, the extent of the power given by the Discipline to Quarterly Meetings of Ministers and Elders is to *counsel and advise* their constituent Preparative Meetings. The words of the Discipline are, "And in the said Quarterly Meetings, the queries are also to be read, with the answers which are brought from their Preparative Meetings, and the state of the members weightily considered, that, where occa-

sion requires it, *advice and counsel* may be seasonably extended," &c. Page 66. The Quarterly Meeting, therefore, by undertaking to *assist* the Preparative Meeting, (by which was intended, as subsequent events demonstrated, to procure a charge against a member of the Preparative Meeting, in opposition to the sense and judgment of said meeting,) exhibited in its conduct a manifest example of assumption of power.

2. The committee, by reporting the ministry unsound on the accusation of one individual, and contrary to the official answers, committed a direct infringement of that part of our discipline which directs, that "a timely and tender care be extended to such person according to gospel order; first by the individuals concerned, and then by the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders to which he or she may belong:" and that "should these labours prove unavailing, report of the *case* should be made *by that meeting* to the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and there a few friends be deputed to assist," &c. (*See page 68.*)

We say, this proceeding of the committee was a direct violation of the Discipline—because,  
 1. No labour on account of unsoundness in ministry had been extended by the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders. 2. The



Preparative Meeting had not made the pre-requisite report to the Quarterly Meeting, which the Discipline expressly enjoins. 3. The committee demonstrated a disposition of unkindly feeling to our preparative Meeting of Ministers and elders, by taking the accusation of one individual in opposition to our official answers to the queries, and by reporting accordingly.

3. The Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, by adopting this report, and by continuing the committee in service under such circumstances, sanctioned this violation of Discipline and gospel order.

4. The committee by identifying and attempting to visit as an offender, a minister to whom no care had been extended by the said Preparative Meeting, and who was in unity both with the Monthly Meeting and the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and by thus identifying him in opposition to the official answers to the queries, committed a direct infraction upon the Discipline before cited. This act of the committee also involved a principle calculated to promote discord among the members of our Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders, and between said Preparative Meeting and the Monthly Meeting. It had also an obvious tendency to obstruct the clear answering of

the third Query, respecting ministers and elders, viz. "Are they in unity one with another, and with the meeting they belong to, harmoniously labouring for truth's honour?" *Page 96.*

We next state, that on account of open and continued opposition manifested by two of our women elders, not only to the Monthly Meeting but to particular members, this meeting, after having appointed a committee to take into consideration the relative standing of our elders, and after having, on their united report, weightily deliberated upon the subject, came to the judgment that the service of these two Friends had ceased as elders of the meeting. And accordingly they were released from said service, on the authority of the following Discipline.

1. That part of the third Query, just cited, which requires that ministers and elders be "in unity one with another, and with the meeting they belong to." *Page 96.*

2. That part of our Discipline respecting elders, which directs that Monthly Meetings *take care* "that the Friends chosen for that service, be prudent, solid Friends, and that they do carefully *discharge* the trust confided to them." *Page 63.* Both these injunctions of the Discipline obviously make it obligatory on Monthly Meetings, to have such elders only as are in unity

with them, and also, to have none that are not qualified for the station, or that do not “carefully discharge the trust confided to them.”

3. That part of our Discipline which directs what course shall be pursued in Meetings of Ministers and Elders in reference to the release of a member of those meetings who may “be thought, by negligence, unfaithfulness, or otherwise, to have lost his or herservice in that station, so as to become the subject of uneasiness and burthensome”—Yet manifestly giving an *anteccedent and paramount right and authority to Monthly Meetings*, to take such individuals under care, in the words following: viz. “yet not so as to be under the care of a Meeting of Discipline on that account or for misconduct.” The words “that account” manifestly referring to loss of service, by “negligence, unfaithfulness, or otherwise.” P. 68.

We believed, and we are confirmed in the correctness of the conclusion, that this last part of the Discipline cited, taken in connexion with the other two parts, fully authorized and enjoined this Monthly Meeting, on the ground that their service had ceased in that capacity, to release the Friends before alluded to, from their station as elders in this meeting. And accordingly, as before observed, a minute was made to that effect.

Afterwards these Friends offered to the Quarterly Meeting, a written communication, stating in general terms, that they were aggrieved by the proceedings of Green street Monthly Meeting, without specifying in what respects they considered themselves aggrieved.

A strong effort was then made in the Quarterly Meeting, by certain members, to make this an appeal case; but this measure was overruled.

Our representatives, and other members, attempted to explain what the alleged grievance was; but this was strenuously objected to, on the plea, that as the Quarterly Meeting was not officially informed of the nature and merits of the case, it had no right, as a Quarterly Meeting, to know any thing about them; and hence was urged the necessity of appointing a committee to inquire into the circumstances.

In this way the Quarterly Meeting came to the judgment that a committee should be appointed to investigate into the nature of the supposed grievance, that a fair understanding might be had by the meeting, in respect to the propriety of hearing the complainants, and a committee was accordingly nominated. This committee undertook to transform the memorial of these elders into an appeal case, waited on our Monthly Meeting, and requested it to appoint a com-

mittee to carry forward before them the minutes of our proceedings.

But this meeting believing that the Quarterly Meeting's committee had not been authorized to take this course, that our Monthly Meeting was not authorized to sanction it, that by the Discipline the Quarterly Meeting *itself* had no jurisdiction in the case, and also believing, not only on this account, but because of the great disunity in the Quarterly Meeting, that the appointment was irregular, declined nominating any committee.

The Quarterly Meeting's committee persisted, however, in their determination to make it an appeal; and accordingly, without any committee having been appointed by us, and without informing the Quarterly Meeting what it was our meeting had done, reported it as their judgment, that the proceedings of Green street Monthly Meeting in relation to these two Friends, be annulled.

Here again our representatives, and other members, attempted to explain, that it was, or had been constituted, *an appeal for the office of an elder*; that these two Friends had merely been released from that station: and moreover, the conversion of this case into an appeal, (in the sense in which that term is used in the Discipline) had been over-ruled by the preceding Quarterly

Meeting. But we were told, as we had been in some other cases offered to the consideration of the Quarterly Meeting, that "the members of Green street Meeting could not be heard."

So that the Quarterly Meeting remains yet uninformed of the decision of our meeting, and also of the nature of the supposed grievance. Yet nevertheless a minute is recorded on the books of said Quarterly Meeting, adopting the judgment of the committee, that the proceedings of our meeting be annulled.

To these measures we make the following objections—1. The committee transformed this case into an appeal, against the express understanding of the Quarterly Meeting.

2. On their report, the Quarterly Meeting sanctioned this proceeding; and thereby assumed the principle, that committees have a right to exceed the instructions of the Meeting appointing them to service.

3. There is no Discipline which recognizes a right to appeal for the office of an elder.

4. The Quarterly Meeting, by recognizing this case as an appeal, in effect assumed to itself the power to make discipline.

5. By this act the Quarterly Meeting has denied to Monthly Meetings, their right of selecting from among their own members, such as

they may deem most eligible to fill the offices of said meetings; and has also assumed the right to oblige our Monthly Meeting to acknowledge such as the Quarterly Meeting may think suitable.

6. By this act the Quarterly Meeting has declared, that although Monthly Meetings are competent to judge of the qualification of individuals to serve them as elders, yet they are not competent to judge of disqualification; or, in other words, the Quarterly Meeting has declared, that the power which appoints, is not sufficient to release an elder from that office.

7. By this act, the Quarterly Meeting has assumed the principle, that in a remonstrance or an appeal, it is not necessary that the meeting should know that the party has been deprived of any right or privilege by the act of a Monthly Meeting, or what the decision of the Monthly Meeting has been in relation to the party, prior to its reversal by the Quarterly Meeting.

8. The Quarterly Meeting, by adopting the report of the committee to annul the proceedings of Green street Monthly Meeting, decided the question which, at a previous Quarterly Meeting, when the case of the elder first alluded to was before it, it agreed to refer to the Yearly Meeting for its determination.

To proceed now with our narrative, it will be proper here to recur to the remonstrance of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders against our Monthly Meeting, and the memorial of the elder just noticed, and which, as has been mentioned, the general Quarterly Meeting concluded, in the 5th mo. 1826, to lay before the Yearly Meeting. In relation to the case growing out of these, it will be sufficient to state, that owing to the disunity and discordant views apparent in the Yearly Meeting, this, with several important subjects that had come up from other Quarterly Meetings, was dismissed without being taken up—that body thus acknowledging itself incompetent to their adjudication. Hence our Monthly Meeting was necessarily left without a remedy, as it regarded the proceedings of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting.

We will next direct our attention to the circumstance of the appointment of a committee in the Quarterly Meeting to visit the Monthly Meetings. This appointment took place in the 11th mo. 1826; and although the opposition to it was so great that the clerk at one time declared that he could not conscientiously receive names for it, yet after much time spent in discussing the measure, and in total disregard of the judgment



expressed by a large, if not the larger, part of the meeting, a committee was appointed.

As it had become manifest by the proceedings of the Quarterly Meeting, that our rights as a Monthly Meeting would not be respected, it was concluded, after deliberate consideration, at a Monthly Meeting held 4th month last, to dissolve our connexion with Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting. A minute expressive of this conclusion was made, and a committee appointed to give the information to the next Quarterly Meeting to be held in the 5th month. This was done by one of the Friends nominated to that service, who also laid on the table of the clerk, a copy of the minute of this Monthly Meeting on that subject, which was read.

At this Quarterly Meeting the forementioned committee, which had been appointed to visit the Monthly Meetings, made a report, in which they recommended that Green street Monthly Meeting should be laid down, and its members attached to the Northern District Monthly Meeting, which report was adopted.

To these proceedings on the part of the Quarterly Meeting, we object. 1. That previously to this act of the Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia, Green street Monthly Meeting had dissolved its connexion with that meeting, and was

therefore not under its jurisdiction, and of this fact the Quarterly Meeting had been officially informed.

2. In attempting to lay down our Monthly Meeting, without first obtaining its consent to the measure, the Quarterly Meeting broke the following discipline, viz. “It is agreed that no Quarterly Meeting *be set up or laid down*, without the consent of the Yearly Meeting; no Monthly Meeting without the consent of the Quarterly Meeting; nor any Preparative or *other meeting for business or worship* till application to the Monthly Meeting is *first made*, and, *when there approved*, the consent of the Quarterly Meeting be also obtained.” Page 32.

By this rule it is manifest, that a Quarterly Meeting has no other power than to confirm or prevent the setting up or laying down of a Monthly Meeting. It is also clear, that a Quarterly Meeting cannot lay down a “Preparative or other Meeting for business or worship, till application to the Monthly Meeting is first made, and when there approved, the consent of the Quarterly Meeting be also obtained.” The terms “other meeting for business,” in the clause, must include a Monthly Meeting. Admitting, however, that they do not include a Monthly Meeting, it would be absurd to sup-

pose, that where there is no power to lay down an inferior, the power exists to lay down a superior meeting. It follows, therefore, that Green street Monthly Meeting not having made such an application, the Quarterly Meeting had no authority to lay it down.

3. As the Discipline was the compact guaranteed to this Monthly Meeting, and as what was not conceded in that compact was unquestionably retained; or, in other words, as in accepting the Discipline when we became a branch of Philadelphia Quarter, we gave no such power to lay down our meeting, it is not now to be implied that such power was intended by the terms of the compact.

4. The absurdity of the application of the rule as construed by the Quarterly Meeting, becomes evident when applied to the *setting up* of a Monthly Meeting without the consent of the parties who are to compose such meeting—the same principle clearly applying in both cases.

5. To suppose that the rights of a Monthly Meeting are to be transferred at the option of a Quarterly Meeting, is repugnant both to the letter and the spirit of the Discipline, as this would imply the existence of a power in the Quarterly Meeting, to attach us, as members, to any Monthly Meeting within the limits of the

said Quarter, notwithstanding the inconvenience or injustice that might be consequent on such a transfer.

6. Were it admitted that the Quarterly Meeting had the abstract right to lay down a Monthly Meeting without its consent, there was no valid reason existing for the procedure in the case of Green street Monthly Meeting. Our Monthly Meeting had not only been regularly kept up, and the Discipline administered with propriety, but we had been favoured to enjoy a greater degree of unity and harmony than any other of the Monthly Meetings in the city. For these and the above reasons, the proceeding of the Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia can only be regarded as an arbitrary measure, unwarranted by Discipline.

Our Monthly Meeting having, as has been stated, dissolved its connexion with Philadelphia Quarter, came also to the conclusion to apply to Abington Quarterly Meeting, to be received as a branch of that meeting. The application was accordingly brought before that Quarter, in the 5th month last, in which, on a full and decided expression of the sense of that meeting, the proposal was agreed to, and a copy of the minute then made was directed to be sent down to our

Monthly Meeting, which from that period became a branch of Abington Quarterly Meeting.

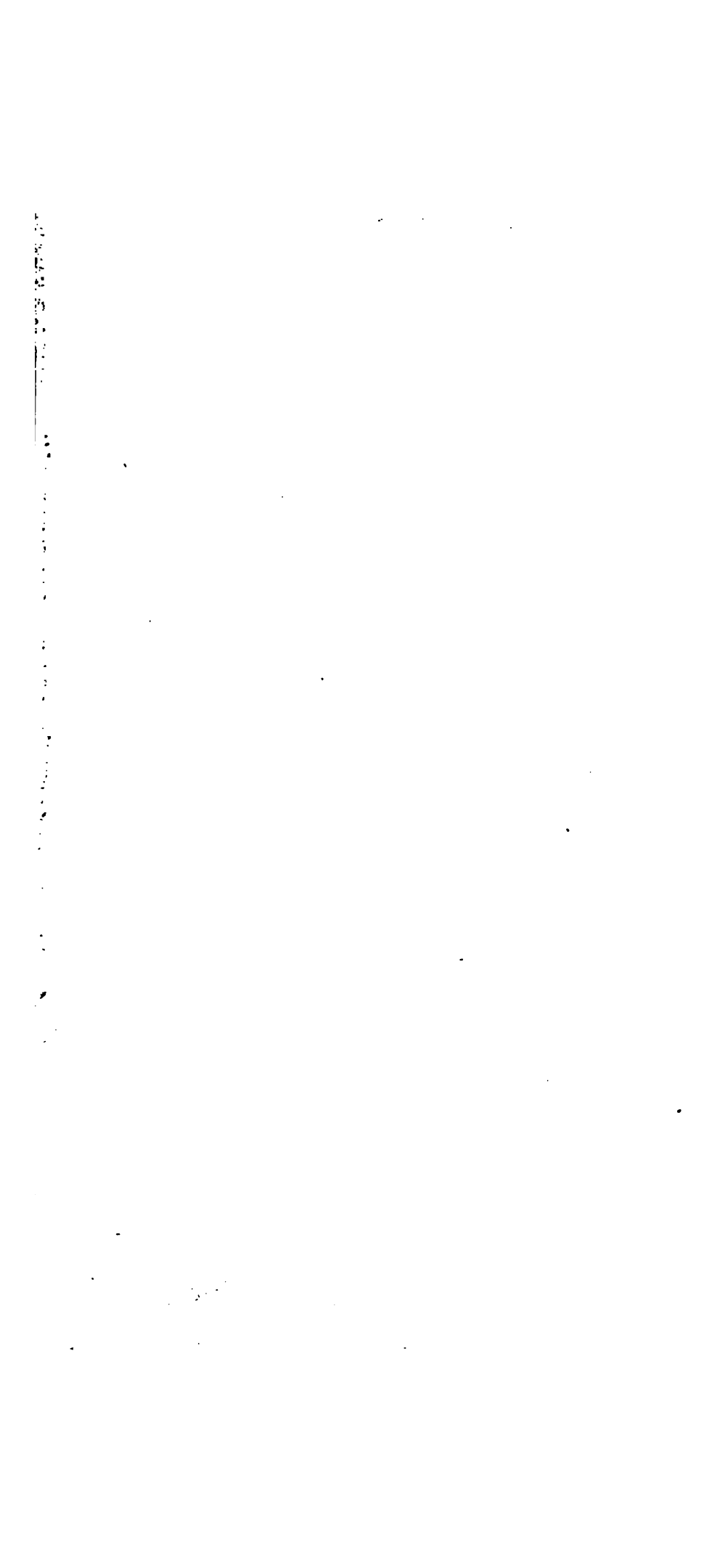
In justification of this step, we observe—

1. That the Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia by admitting on its records the proceedings of the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in direct opposition to that rule of Discipline which says, “None of the said meetings of Ministers and Elders are in anywise to interfere with business of any meeting for discipline,” and by other infractions of the Discipline, noticed in this statement, did virtually release our Monthly Meeting from accountability to said Quarter as a superior meeting—it being evident that our subordination was to be *in the order prescribed by the Discipline, and not out of it*. And therefore as the Quarterly Meeting had departed from this order, we had a right, as a Monthly Meeting, to take any step, not prohibited by that compact, which would secure to us the enjoyment of our civil and religious privileges.

2. By attaching ourselves to Abington Quarter, we have departed neither from the letter nor the spirit of the Discipline: there is no provision in the former against such a step, neither is it implied by the latter that we are not to seek a peaceable and orderly retreat from an alarming infringement of our rights as a Monthly Meeting,

when, in seeking such a retreat, we connect ourselves with a Quarterly Meeting governed by the same Discipline.

To conclude. While we deplore the desolation which exists in our borders, and feel that the waste places of Zion are many, we sincerely hope and believe that the period will arrive, when Jerusalem will become "a rejoicing, and her people a joy." And desiring that we may keep the patience under all the trials we may be permitted to experience, we recommend to our members that they cultivate a spirit of forbearance and brotherly love, thereby evidencing that they are under the influence of that power which inspired the anthem of "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men."



## CHAPTER XI.

INCONSISTENT PROCEEDINGS IN THE MEETING  
FOR SUFFERINGS.

The maxim, that a society which does not often recur to first principles is in danger of going to decay, appears to have been verified in the society of Friends. The dust of three generations has been sufficient to cover from the sight of many of its members the true origin and constitution of some of the most effective institutions in the society. It must appear surprising to a reflecting mind, acquainted with the liberal nature and tendency of the principles of Friends, that the Meeting for Sufferings of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, in the year 1826 virtually declared itself a permanent body; or that its members were not removable by their constituents.

The Southern Quarterly Meeting taking into consideration the state of its representation in the Meeting for Sufferings, judged it advisable to make a new nomination, which released two of its former representatives resident in the city,



who had taken an active part in measures contrary to its views, and to the declaration of a considerable number of their constituents in relation to matters of fact that had transpired within their own limits and knowledge. The release of those two members of the Meeting for Sufferings caused considerable sensation in that body, who encouraged them to present to it a remonstrance against the proceedings of the Quarterly Meeting in releasing them; which was received and acted upon, and the minute of the Quarterly Meeting appointing the new members was rejected, and they denied the right and privilege of members. A committee was appointed by the Meeting for Sufferings to attend the Southern Quarter, with a view to convince that meeting of the illegality of nominating new representatives whilst the former were willing to serve. A member of this committee used considerable argument to show that it never was intended to release the representatives from the Quarterly Meeting to the Meeting for Sufferings, except at their own request. These arguments failing to convince the Southern Quarter, that meeting adopted a minute, to be presented to the Yearly Meeting, remonstrating against the proceedings of the Meeting for Sufferings. It seems strange that the active agent of this committee, having

free access to the records of the society, should attempt, in the face of a Quarterly Meeting, to maintain a position so inconsistent with the nature of the case, and so much at variance with the fact.

In recurring to the history of the Meeting for Sufferings of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, we find that this committee had its origin in the year 1756, during an Indian war, when Friends near the frontiers were subjected to considerable trial and hardship. The committee of correspondence with England suggested the propriety of raising additional funds and placing them at the disposal of a committee to be appointed in the most equitable way. Twelve members by the Yearly Meeting at large, and four from every Quarter to sit on their own adjournments. The duties assigned this committee were "to consider the cases of those brought under suffering at that time by the Indians; to correspond with the Meeting for Sufferings in London; and to represent the Yearly Meeting in all cases where the reputation and interest of truth required, provided they did not meddle with matters of faith and discipline not already determined in the Yearly Meeting."\* This committee was direct-

\* Yearly Meeting's minute in 1756.

ed to keep minutes of its proceedings and report them annually to the Yearly Meeting, which appears by the records to have been done, and the committee was continued from year to year by the approbation of the Yearly Meeting.

In 1761 the Yearly Meeting continued the Meeting for Sufferings in the "same manner it was constituted, reserving to each Quarterly Meeting their privilege of changing their representatives when they think proper." This minute was extracted from the record by James Pemberton, clerk to the meeting that year, and shows the judicious care of Friends at that time, to guard their rights, as well as to define the nature and duties of the Meeting for Sufferings. Had succeeding Yearly and Quarterly Meetings been sufficiently careful to renew, from time to time, their representatives, the Meeting for Sufferings never would have assumed that degree of importance and high tone in action that have been witnessed in latter years.

It is not intended indiscriminately to censure the members of the Meeting for Sufferings. There have been many valuable individuals exercising a place in this body, and they may have been of service in promoting the benevolent and philanthropic views of the society. But it can not be disguised that the principals in the ortho-

dox party, have for a number of years been giving a direction to the influence and power of the Meeting for Sufferings to favour their own views. A long succession of valuable individuals concentrating a considerable weight of religious character and talent in this meeting, had rendered it highly respectable in the view of the society; and these orthodox members, entering into the labours of past generations, and feeling themselves in a situation to grasp, and circumscribe within the compass of their power, the general control of the society, appear to have considered the whole concern as their *inheritance*. Their views and opinions were raised into a standard. Their dictum was assumed as a governing principle and no limits were to restrain the operation of their designs. Nothing appears to have been wanting but civil power, to enable them to fulfil the models delineated by their prototypes in ancient times, when the voice of superstitious legitimacy resounded, the people have nothing to do with church or state but to obey them.

Let us attend to undeniable fact. We have seen that in the 8th mo. 1822, the most active members of the Meeting for Sufferings, resolved themselves into a private conference, and undertook to decide both in relation to doctrine and discipline, at the expense of all order emanating from any institutions of the society. It may

be alleged they were here not acting in any public character; but this more fully confirms both their disposition and determination, to subject the society to their unconditional control: else, why act inconsistent with their public functions and private duties, in covertly moving forward as a dark body to interrupt the order and harmony of society.

We have seen these men in 1823, bringing into action all their zeal and power, to introduce, through the Meeting for Sufferings, the substance of their school acumen and notional opinions of theology, as a future standard of doctrinal faith, which might sanction ulterior movements in the adoption and consolidation of their exclusive system. So sanguine were they in the wisdom of their plan, and so sure of success, that an edition of their work was printed, and copies of it are said already to have been transmitted to England, even before it was covertly submitted to the Yearly Meeting, which so promptly rejected it. These facts distinctly express, more certainly than any form of words, that the duties of the Meeting for Sufferings, by the agency of a few active leaders, were strangely perverted from the original purpose, and instead of listening to the calls of their constituents, the members of that meeting in effect declared themselves an

independent body. What other construction can be put upon the rejection of the nomination of the Southern Quarter. This construction is justified, by the subsequent procedure of those who continued to act as the Meeting for Sufferings in the second week of 4th mo. 1828.

We have distinctly seen the origin of this meeting, that it was nothing more than a committee formed by representatives from the Yearly and Quarterly Meetings, and never had, nor can have any just power but what is derived from its constituents, who are the general body of society. The general body of the Yearly Meeting, in recurrence to first principles, having been compelled, by the irregular proceedings of the orthodox party, to reorganize the Yearly Meeting on the ancient foundation, free from party strife and incumbrance, was in session in regular order, representing about twenty thousand members, at the very period the remnant of this Meeting for Sufferings thought proper to exercise the shadow of its former power, and prepare for the acceptance of their adherents, a declaration which goes clearly to manifest a disposition to join with the ancient opposers of Friends in an effort to unchristianize the society. What else could be the design of deliberately declaring and publishing to the world, by every means in their power, that the

reorganised Yearly Meeting that had dispensed with their services, "Openly deny the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, as they are laid down by our blessed Redeemer and his apostles in the Holy Scriptures." This charge, and others of similar character, are believed only to be the Shibboleth of party distinction, or the exhibition of a specious pretence for doings unjustifiable on any acknowledged principles of the Society. It is hardly possible for these men to force their minds actually to believe that the great body of Friends have departed from the sensibilities of Truth, and the fundamental principles of the society. Notwithstanding the dereliction of their accusers from the accustomed relations of the society, there is sufficient weight of religious character left to put to the blush the promoters of such deliberate and unfounded slander. The charges made can only be regarded by the dispassionate as the fleeting ebullitions of party prejudice, combined with a selfish policy to defend their cause by accusing their brethren. All the forced constructions and representations from isolated extracts, and external considerations, will fail to invalidate the christian principles of Friends, if by habitual example they afford a practical evidence that their faith stands not in word only, but in that virtue of truth which gives victory over evil.

It is no wonder these men seek a defence in Doctrinal controversy, and cover their pretensions with the veil of notional speculation. Habitual deviation in practice, will ever lead from the simplicity of correct principle. Friends do not question their accusers respecting their faith; they do not in the least wish to circumscribe the exercise of it towards God in a pure conscience; but if they have stronger faith than their brethren, let them have it to themselves and show it by its fruits. Unhappily the fruits brought forth have greatly tended to lessen all confidence either in the purity or superiority of their faith. Does it accord with any fruit of the Gospel spirit for a few individuals to arrogate to themselves all the soundness of christian principle in the society, and upon that assumption claim absolute power to rule unrestrained? This certainly furnishes an affecting evidence of the desolating consequences resulting from that spirit of insubordination to the principles, and wonted practice of the society of Friends, which some of these men have so long persisted in to the violation of its peaceable testimony.

The late "Declaration," said to be prepared in the Meeting for Sufferings, fraught as it is with virulent misrepresentations against the principal body of Friends composing Philadelphia Yearly



Meeting, is evidently the production of a mind much heated with party animosity. Glossed over with the sophisms of orthodoxy, it was evidently passed through the meetings whose name it bears, as a fit instrument to ensure the present purpose of exhibiting an imposing appearance before the public. It must however, vanish before the light of truth like the fleeting mists of the morning before the rising sun.

It is not supposed that even the greater number remaining in the Meeting for Sufferings cordially approve of all the doings of their active leaders, or are sufficiently aware of the tendency of their conduct, much less are all the other members of society still adhering to them. There are many sober judicious Friends who are at a loss to comprehend the real state of things, whose minds are brought under great perplexity and suffering, and are held in a grievous state of bondage. Their fears are awakened by the spurious representations of unsoundness, and the deceitful exhibition of views the same in substance, but differing in words or terms. The devoted partizans of orthodoxy seem to cling with fastidious adherence to the outward circumstances and externals of the christian dispensation, as if salvation depended on a correct apprehension of the letter or terms; while Friends, without calling these in question, prin-

cipally direct the attention to the original principle of all truth, and particularly insist on the necessity of experiencing its inward power and virtue. The orthodox are pleased to call this 'a refined spirituality,' and designate it as the fruitful source of that defection from their influence and power, which they so much deplore. But did not Friends always believe in the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ? Has it not always been the distinguishing principle of the Society, that every one possesses a seed of the kingdom in a measure of divine light, life, or grace? Are not the orthodox also ultimately obliged to admit a belief in the operation of the divine spirit, as the effective means of salvation? Where then is the difference in point of substance. It seems only a misunderstanding of terms: but it is feared that in many instances wilful perversion is resorted to, in order to promote the appearance of difference where in reality there is none.

It is not the intention of the writer to enter into doctrinal controversy. He has a testimony against it; believing that opinionated speculation seldom stands in connexion with practical piety. It is time for christian professors to learn, that to our own Master we stand or fall, and that all saving faith is the gift of God. If we would sedulously emulate each other in labours of love,

charity, and brotherly kindness, it would sooner draw to the true centre of unity, than all the laboured criticisms on words or the dissection of terms, demolishing one opinion to rebuild another. Doubtful disputations may sharpen the wit, and bring into action the deceit of ingenuity; but will never better the heart nor improve the dispositions of any.

For the sake of those tried minds who have been imposed upon by the representations of unsoundness, arising from speculation of equivocal terms, directed in a way to make it appear, that Friends deny the divinity of Christ while they lay claim to the doctrine of the spirit, the judicious views of Thomas Clarkson on the subject, as exhibited in his *Portraiture of Quakerism*, vol. 2nd. chap. 9th, are annexed.

“The Quakers, then, believe that the spirit of God formed or created the world. They believe that a portion of it was given to men, after this creation, as a guide to them in their spiritual concerns. They believe that this portion of it was continued to them after the deluge, in the same manner and for the same purposes, to the time of Christ. It was given, however, in this interval to different persons in different degrees. Thus Moses was more illuminated by it than his cotemporaries: for it became through him the

author of the law. Thus the prophets received a greater portion of it than ordinary persons in their own times. In the time of Christ it continued the same office; but it was then given more diffusively than before, and also more diffusively to some than to others. Thus the evangelists and apostles received it in an extraordinary degree; and it became through them, and Jesus Christ their head, the author of the gospel. But, besides its office of a spiritual light and guide to men in their spiritual concerns, during all the period now assigned, it became to them, as they attended to its influence, an inward Redeemer, producing in them a new birth, and leading them to perfection. And as it was thus both a guide and inward redeemer so it has continued these offices to the present day."

"Now an objection will be made to the proposition, as I have just stated it, by some Christians, and even by those, who do not wish to derogate from the spirit of God, (for I have frequently heard it started by such,) that the Quakers, by means of these doctrines, make every thing of the spirit, and but little of Jesus Christ. I shall therefore notice this objection in this place, not so much with a view of answering it, as of attempting to show, that Christians have not always a right apprehension of scriptural terms, and there-

fore that they sometimes quarrel with one another about trifles; or rather, that when they have disputes with each other, there is sometimes scarcely a shade of difference between them.

To those who make the objection I shall describe the proposition, which has been stated above, in different terms. I shall leave out the words 'Spirit of God,' and I shall wholly substitute the term 'Christ.' This I shall do upon the authority of some of our best divines. The proposition will then run thus:

God, by Christ, created the world, "for without him was not any thing made that was made."

He made, by Christ also, the terrestrial globe, on which we live. He made the whole host of heaven. He made therefore, besides our own, other planets and other worlds.

He caused also, by Christ, the generation of all animated nature, and of course of the life and vital powers of man.

He occasioned also, by the same Christ, the generation of reason or intellect, and of a spiritual faculty, to man.

Man, however, had not long been created before he fell into sin. It pleased God, therefore, that the same Christ, which had thus appeared in creation, should strive inwardly with man, and awaken his spiritual faculties, by which he

might be able to know good from evil, and to obtain inward redemption from the pollutions of sin. And this inward striving of Christ was to be with every man, in after times, so that all would be inexcusable, and subjected to condemnation, if they sinned."

"From this new statement of the proposition, which statement is consistent with the language of divines, it will appear that, if the Quakers have made every thing of the Spirit, and but little of Christ, I have made, to suit the objectors, every thing of Christ, and but little of the Spirit. Now I would ask, Where lies the difference between the two statements? Which is the more accurate? or whether, when I say these things were done by the Spirit, and when I say that they were done by Christ, I do not state precisely the same proposition, or express the same thing.

That Christ, in all the offices stated by the proposition, is neither more nor less than the spirit of God, there can surely be no doubt. In looking at Christ, we are generally apt to view him with carnal eyes. We can seldom divest ourselves of the idea of a body belonging to him, though this was confessedly human, and can seldom consider him as a pure Principle or Fountain of Divine Light and Life to men. And yet it is obvious,

that we must view him in this light in the present case; for, if he was at the creation of the world or with Moses at the delivery of the law, (which the proposition supposes,) he could not have been there in his carnal body, because this was not produced till centuries afterwards from the Virgin Mary. In this abstracted light the apostles frequently view Christ themselves. Thus St. Paul: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."\* And again: "Know ye not your own-selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"† Now no person imagines that St. Paul had any idea, that the body of Christ was either in himself, or in others, on the occasions on which he has thus spoken.

That Christ, as he held the offices contained in the proposition, was the spirit of God, we may pronounce from various views, which we may take of him, all of which seem to lead us to the same conclusion.

And first let us look at Christ in the scriptural light, in which he has been held forth to us in the fourth section of the seventh chapter, where I have explained the particular notions of the Quakers relative to the new birth. God may be considered here as having produced, by means of

\* Galat. ii, 20.

† 2 Cor. xiii, 5.

his Holy Spirit, a birth of divine life in the soul of "the body which had been prepared," and this birth was Christ. "But that which is born of the Spirit," says St. John, "is Spirit." \* The only question then will be as to the magnitude of the Spirit thus produced. In answer to this, St. John says, "that God gave him not the Spirit by measure." † And St. Paul says the same thing: "For in him all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily." ‡ Now we can have no idea of a Spirit without measure, or containing the fulness of the Godhead, but the Spirit of God.

Let us now look at Christ in another point of view, or as St. Paul seems to have viewed him. He defines Christ to be "the wisdom of God and the power of God." § But what are the wisdom of God and the power of God, but the great characteristics and the great constituent parts of his spirit?"

It is hoped the discerning reader, by the application of the above extract, will perceive that many of the insinuations of unsoundness against friends arise from the use of equivocal terms, and not from any just or true ground. Friends adhere to Scripture terms, and the primitive language of the society, in relation to doctrinal sub-

\* John iii, 6. † John iii, 34 ‡ Coloss. ii, 9. § 1 Cor, i, 24.



jects, whilst the orthodox disputants in exhibiting their views of what they term the proper Divinity of Christ, and the exercise or application of his mediatorial offices, appear to adopt the phraseology of what is called "the reformed churches." There is safety in keeping to the form of sound words, and dwelling under that influence of Truth, which preserves in "a pure language." However the doctrinal views of the orthodox may differ from the simplicity and purity of the fundamental principle of Friends, it should be distinctly understood that it has been their assumed power in disciplinary practice that has, of late, so much agitated the society. We do not censure private opinions; but claim the privilege of noticing those public fruits brought forth injurious to the rights of others.

## CHAPTER XII.

DIVIDING CAUSES IN THE YEARLY MEETING  
OF FRIENDS HELD IN PHILADELPHIA IN  
THE FOURTH MONTH, 1827.

The disorganized state of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, and the unprecedented and over-bearing measures pursued in four of the city Monthly Meetings, raised a deep and feeling interest in the minds of many Friends, through the several Quarters of the Yearly Meeting. They felt for their brethren under proscription and oppression, and for the reputation and even the safety of society. It was apparent measures were in progress the fulfilment of which would greatly affect the vital interests of the society, by introducing habits of arbitrary rule instead of that mild equitable and consistent administration of discipline which is indispensable to the very nature and ends of religious fellowship. It was not difficult to foresee, that if those calling themselves orthodox succeeded in their views and plans in the city, the same system would

be extended to the country Quarters. It was well known that great exertions had been made, for some years, to secure the interest of leading members in the country, by means of the members of the Meeting for Sufferings, and by anonymous publications, exhibiting distorted representations in relation to matters of fact, as well as doctrines. Agreeably to the theory and practice of orthodoxy, if a few prominent characters were firmly secured in the several Quarters, their system would go into operation without any control. If the elders and members of the Meeting for Sufferings, were sufficiently active to secure the clerk and to direct him in their several meetings, no difficulty was anticipated in regard to the body of society, whose feelings were not to be consulted or regarded. Unblushing attempts had already been made, to render both elders and members of the Meeting for Sufferings independent of their constituents, and, upon the same principle, there was nothing in the way to render clerks of the several meetings, permanent also. A distinct and separate order of persons engrossing all the direction of the affairs of society, would divest others of their disciplinary functions and then where would be the security of individual rights and liberty of conscience?

These were not visionary fears. Previous to

the Yearly Meeting of 1827, they had, in the city, been realized. A great portion of the city members had often been declared unsound, and were not to be heard or regarded. They were virtually disfranchised, many of them were proscribed, some taken under dealing, on frivolous pretexts, and in a short time those denominated disaffected, or who would not yield to the dictum of orthodoxy, were to be "scattered to the four winds of heaven, as the dust of the summer threshing floor."

Such were the attitude, the menaces, and doings of orthodoxy in the society of Friends, in the spring of 1827, within the limits of the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia. From its origin in a selfish and exclusive spirit, we have traced the progress of orthodoxy, and may distinctly perceive, that it occupies the same place in religious society, that aristocracy does in civil and political life. They are twin brothers, produced by power superceding right, and form the chief support of tyranny, and the very essence of arbitrary rule.

From a knowledge of facts already transpired, and the gloomy forebodings of the future movements of that discordant and unfeeling spirit, which had produced such desolating ravages on the peace of the society, it was not

surprising that the sensibilities and sympathies of many Friends were particularly awakened in feeling solicitude, for the application of those means necessary to interrupt the progress of irregular proceedings, and to deliver the society from the reproach resulting from the painful disorders that prevailed. The subject matter in relation to Green street Monthly Meeting which had so long distracted Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting, and which was referred to the Yearly Meeting, it was hoped would bring into action the constitutional powers of the Yearly Meeting to correct abuses, and stem the torrent of irregular procedure, produced by the aberrations of orthodoxy, seeking the gratification of its own will. But such was the excited and deteriorated state of the Yearly Meeting, that instead of being able to act consistent with its own dignity, and place judgment upon the spirit of disorder and misrule, it confessed its incompetency to lay hold on subjects brought by minute before it.

In the first sitting of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, a presage was given by the orthodox party that they were determined at all hazards to pursue their accustomed course of exclusive party measures. An abatement in the answer to the query respecting the soundness of the ministry being purposely brought from Phila-

Philadelphia Quarter was made the pretext to nominate a committee to go down to the select Quarterly and Preparative Meetings, although the answers from all the other Quarters were satisfactory. The exception in that from Philadelphia Quarter was brought up from Pine street Preparative Meeting, where it is well known there was no objection to their own ministers, and of course it was introduced to answer an ulterior purpose. The opposition to the proposal, in the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and elders was decided and unrelaxed, from an entire conviction that it was, in all its bearings, a distinct party measure. What was to be expected from vesting with authority, and sending down to Quarterly and Preparative Meetings of Ministers and Elders, individuals who had so long violated all discipline and decorum by carrying measures over the heads of their brethren; and what possible object can we conceive in such an appointment, but to legalise their own assumption and unjust domination? Individuals who had long been aggressors, were to be invested with a commission to judge what and who were sound, and to establish their favourite dogmas over the heads of innocent and consistent Friends!

Notwithstanding the strong opposition expressed to this measure, whilst sober and judicious Friends were remonstrating against it, the clerk,

in defiance of all decorum, filled up the outlines of his own conceptions in the case, and recorded the nomination of a committee congenial with the designs of his party. This was an absolute forcible measure in the midst of an assembly professing the principle of non-resistance, and many solid and judicious Friends saw there was no hope left, that the Yearly Meeting in its present state could answer the purposes of its institution.

At a subsequent sitting a Friend proposed a reconsideration of this arbitrary measure — thus affording the orthodox party an opportunity of retracing their steps, and of mingling in condescension with their brethren; but they remained deaf to the voice of entreaty and conciliation, and by their unbending obstinacy forever cancelled the bond of union.

The general Yearly Meeting met at the usual time, and passed the first sitting in the customary way. The representatives from the several Quarters, were as usual, directed to bring forward to next sitting the name of a suitable Friend to serve the meeting as clerk, and one to assist him. They occupied all the time between the fore and afternoon sittings, without being able to come to any agreement on the nomination of a clerk. The orthodox party knew that their success depended upon the former clerk, who had

always assiduously devoted himself to the support of their views. On the contrary the general body of Friends fully believed that the correction of existing abuses greatly depended upon a disinterested and upright clerk, who would take the general voice of the meeting in deciding cases. It was ascertained there were about two thirds of the representatives Friends, and one third orthodox. The latter although they did not represent one sixth of the society yet they continued to debate with and amuse the representatives until Friends again generally assembled, expecting by this means to secure the continuance of the former clerk. In the opening of the afternoon sitting an individual stated, that the representatives could not agree on any name for clerk. But it did not appear that the representatives agreed upon any report whatever, as the greater part of them were interrupted while in the act of forming a report, by one of the committee opening the door and giving admission to the members who were collected without. Some of the representatives explicitly stated in the meeting, that no individual had been authorized to report that they (the representatives) could not agree—that on the contrary they had not finished their business, and expected to meet again to prepare a report.



Some individuals of the orthodox party may have agreed among themselves to make such a report, and this they probably did on the presumption that it would be a means of continuing the former clerk. Accordingly an ancient Friend mentioned his having attended the meeting sixty years and that when the representatives could not agree the former clerk had always been continued. But the truth is, there never had been an instance of the representatives not being able to agree but on the present occasion, which proves the above declaration to be without any proper application. Upon this solid ground, however, the former clerk, with a full knowledge that he was not acceptable to the general body of the meeting, had the *magnanimity* to record his name as the self constituted organ of a party whose system of action was every day more clearly marking their departure from the unity of the society! Owing to the distracted state of the meeting, arising from the irreconcilable dissent of a party from the unity of the body, a Friend proposed on the next morning, an indefinite adjournment, hoping time might have the effect to cool the minds of active individuals, and bring them into that serious consideration, wherein a way might open for the restoration of that unity which is indispensable to transacting the affairs of religious

society in a consistent manner. This proposition was very generally approved, but could not be carried into effect, for the obvious reason that it did not accord with the views of the orthodox. They in fact retained the meeting in session to effect their own purposes, and having possession of the books, they persisted in the direction of the business, contrary to the voice of the greater number of the members. Thus Philadelphia Yearly Meeting had arrived at a crisis when its regular operation was interrupted by the imposing weight of a party, wrapping themselves up in their separate interests, regardless of the voice or rights of the general body of their fellow members. This state of things required all the patience and equanimity of Friends, and brought many into close exercise that they might be enabled to bear their burthen consistently with the nature of their peaceable testimony, till a way of deliverance might open in clearness. This exercised patient state of mind, induced Friends to remain quiet spectators, to see what the party assuming the power and direction would do, and so far were they from manifesting any unbecoming resentment at being despoiled and deprived of their rights, that they mingled sympathies with their opposers by freely contributing to the relief of Friends in North Carolina, who were about

removing to a more safe asylum, the coloured people under their care.

The orthodox party were sensible that their proceedings in the Yearly Meeting, in forcibly nominating a clerk and taking the direction of the business, were unconstitutional as they openly acknowledged their incompetency to take hold of the subjects which came up on the minutes from several of the Quarterly Meetings. The cases from Bucks, Abington, and the Southern Quarters were dismissed. The case from Philadelphia Quarter respecting Green street Monthly Meeting was, however, designedly referred back to that Quarter, and consequently left those two latter meetings under their former difficulties, without any hope of relief. This circumstance must stand as an additional evidence of that inveterate prejudice and want of generosity which have so much characterized the orthodox party in their assumption of power. If it had not been to gratify their own selfishness why not dismiss the case from Philadelphia Quarter in the same way as the cases from the other Quarters? The fact was, the same individuals of the party being the active agents both in the Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia Quarter, it was placing the case back into their own hands, that they might without restraint, accomplish their designs against Green street Monthly Meeting.

Their last act in the name of the Yearly Meeting was confessedly a distinct party measure—the appointment of a committee out of their ranks, to go down to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings for the purpose of subjecting these to their control and to establish the absolute power of orthodoxy in the Yearly Meeting and all its branches. The nomination of this committee was a violation of the voluntary concession previously made, that the meeting was not in a state to take any active step, which was the reason advanced for dismissing the business that came up from the Quarters, and ought certainly to have stood as a bar to the adoption of any new measure. This self-appointed committee, in its progress, was generally rejected by the different meetings, as the mere tool of a party.

When the representatives could not agree respecting the choice of a clerk, no legal organization nor action could take place in the Yearly Meeting, until that question was fairly settled. The whole proceedings of the orthodox party in conjunction with the clerk, who acted for them, were out of order, and entirely void in regard to the Yearly Meeting; for that society which is no longer able to act in agreement with its first principles, and which absolutely abandons them, destroys by its own power and operations its entire character and standing.

The interruption of the regular operation of the Yearly Meeting by the determined zeal of the orthodox brethren, was cause of painful exercise to many Friends, who, under the pressure of the existing state of the society, were drawn into deep sympathy with one another, desirous for best direction how to proceed under circumstances of a character so peculiarly trying and unprecedented in the annals of the society. Many of the representatives, and other Friends, met in conference, and after deliberate consideration judged it most expedient to exhibit to the members of the Yearly Meeting at large an outline of the actual state of things, and to invite them generally to meet in conference on the first second day in the sixth month, that all might have an opportunity to deliberate, and feel what was best to be done.

The following is a copy of the minutes of the proceedings, and "Address to Friends within the compass of the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia," adopted on this momentous occasion.

"At a meeting of a large number of Friends, from the different branches of the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia, convened at Green street meeting-house on the 19th of the 4th month, 1827, to confer together on the present unsettled

state of the society of Friends, and to consider what measures it may be proper to take, in the openings of Truth, to remedy the distressing evil: after a solemn pause, and under a deep sense of the weighty subject, it was unitedly concluded to address the members of this Yearly Meeting on the affecting occasion; for which purpose an essay being produced, and some progress made in the consideration thereof, the meeting adjourned, to meet again, by Divine permission, to-morrow evening.

4th Month, 20th. Friends again met, and resumed the consideration of the aforesaid Address, which, after deliberate attention, was, with some alterations, unanimously adopted, when the meeting adjourned, to meet again to-morrow.

4th Month, 21st. Friends assembled, pursuant to adjournment. The essay of an Address being again read, and weightily considered, it was agreed that it be signed on behalf of this meeting and that a suitable number of copies thereof be printed for distribution.

*To Friends within the compass of the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia.*

DEAR FRIENDS,

The members of the society of Friends have been permitted, in time past, to be partakers:

together, under the Divine blessing, of the excellent effects produced by the power of that gospel which was professed and lived in by the apostles; and which, after a long night of apostacy, was embraced by our worthy ancestors. We are prepared to record our full conviction, that this same Gospel continues to be open to us, and to all men, and is "the power of God unto salvation" to those that believe in and obey it. Its blessed fruits are love to God and love to man, manifested in life and conduct: and our early Friends gave ample proofs of the tendency and influence of the "new commandment" which Christ gave to his Disciples when he said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Through obedience to it, they became known and distinguished: acting under its sacred influence and government, they were made powerful instruments in opening the door of gospel liberty, and removing many of the fetters that had been formed in the dark night of superstition and error that preceded them. Hence they were prepared to promulgate the glorious truth, that *God alone is the sovereign Lord of conscience*, and that with this unalienable right, no power, civil or ecclesiastical, should ever interfere. This blessed liberty was amply en-

joyed among themselves, and through faithfulness—not to speculative opinions, but to the light of Christ within—they were thus united in the one eternal, unchangeable spirit, and by it became of one heart and one mind. In this truly christian state, they were lights in the world, and as a city set on an hill which cannot be hid. Through their instrumentality, with the blessing of the Almighty upon their labours, our religious society became possessed of this very important spiritual inheritance, and we feel bound to endeavour to preserve it, unfettered by the hand of man, and unalloyed with prescribed modes of faith, framed in the will and wisdom of the creature.

With this great object in view, our attention has been turned to the present condition of this Yearly Meeting, and its different branches; and, by evidence on every hand, we are constrained to declare, that the unity of this body is interrupted—that a division exists among us, developing in its progress views which appear incompatible with each other, and feelings averse to a reconciliation. Doctrines held by one part of society, and which we believe to be sound and edifying, are pronounced by the other part to be unsound and spurious. From this has resulted a state of things that has proved destructive of



peace and tranquility, and in which the fruits of love and condescension have been blasted, and the comforts and enjoyments even of social intercourse greatly diminished. Measures have been pursued which we deem oppressive, and in their nature and tendency calculated to undermine and destroy those benefits, to establish and perpetuate which, should be the purpose of every religious association.

It is only under the influence of "the peaceable spirit and wisdom of Jesus" that discipline can be properly administered, or the affairs of the church transacted "with decency" and in order. This blessed influence is a wall of defence, on the right hand and on the left, protecting all, even the weakest of the flock; and within this sacred inclosure our rights and privileges repose, as in the bosom of society, in perfect security. On this foundation has rested that excellent order which the society of Friends has been favoured, in a good degree, to maintain in its transactions; this is the bond that has united its members together, and enabled them to manage all their concerns in "forbearance and love of each other." But this blessed order has been infringed, both in the present Yearly Meeting, (producing unexampled disorder in some of its sittings,) and in many of its subordinate branches, and has proved

a fruitful source of the difficulties that now exist.

It is under a solemn and deliberate view of this painful state of our affairs, that we feel bound to express to you, under a settled conviction of mind, that the period has fully come in which we ought to look towards making a quiet retreat from this scene of confusion, and we therefore recommend to you deeply to weigh the momentous subject, and to adopt such a course as Truth, under solid and solemn deliberation, may point to in furtherance of this object, that our Society may again enjoy the free exercise of its rights and privileges. And we think proper to remind you, that we have no new Gospel to preach; nor any other foundation to lay than that already laid, and proclaimed by our forefathers, even "Christ within, the hope of glory"—"the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Neither have we any other system of Discipline to propose, than that which we already possess, believing that, whilst we sincerely endeavour to live and walk consistently with our holy profession, and to administer it in the spirit of forbearance and love, it will be found sufficient for the government of the church. And whilst we cherish a reasonable hope to see our Zion, under the Divine blessing, loosen herself "from the

bands of her neck," and put on her strength, and Jerusalem her "beautiful garments," and our annual and other assemblies again crowned with that quietude and peace which become our christian profession; we feel an ardent desire that in all our proceedings tending to this end, our conduct towards all our brethren may, on every occasion, be marked with love and forbearance: that when reviled, we bless; when defamed, we entreat; and when persecuted, that we suffer it.

Finally, brethren, we beseech you, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment." And, now, we "commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Signed by direction and on behalf of the meeting by

John Comly,	Joshua Lippincott,
Robert Moore,	John Hunt,
William Mode,	Stephen Stephens,
Richard Barnard,	Joseph G. Rowland,
John Watson,	William Wharton.

(*Buckingham.*)

Having experienced, in the several sittings of this Conference, a comfortable evidence of Divine regard, imparting strength and encouragement to look forward to another friendly meeting together, this Meeting agrees to adjourn to the first second day in the sixth month next, at ten o'clock in morning, at Green street meeting-house, Philadelphia, if the Lord permit."

## CHAPTER XIII.

OCCURRENCES IN CONNEXION WITH THE GENERAL MEETING OF FRIENDS HELD, BY ADJOURNMENTS, AT GREEN STREET MEETING-HOUSE, IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, ON THE 4TH AND 5TH DAYS OF 6TH MONTH, 1827, PURSUANT TO AN ADJOURNMENT ON THE 21ST OF FOURTH MONTH PREVIOUS.

The orthodox party have inveighed with great virulence against Friends meeting in conference, as if none had a right without their permission; which affords additional evidence of their unreasonable assumption, in attempting to limit and impede their fellow members in the exercise of just rights guaranteed by every institution both religious and civil in this free country. The general conference, held on the first second day of the sixth month, was open to all the members of the Yearly Meeting, without exception. The orthodox party had a right to attend if they thought proper, and take a part in the deliberations: but it certainly was understood that all were to meet on the ground of equality,

and that the concurrent views and feelings of the meeting would obtain sanction, conformably to the primitive practice of the society.

The general body of Friends attending the late Yearly Meeting saw by the effects produced that great deviations from the principles of the society had taken place, and felt the necessity of recurring to first principles that a re-settlement in love and condescension might be experienced, and the society be preserved in accordance with fundamental principles. A general sympathy and fellow-feeling became renewedly awakened, and prevailed amongst Friends. The minds of many brethren in the country became deeply affected with the state of the society in Philadelphia, and their hearts being opened to those under suffering and bondage, they extended a kind and helping hand to them, in the same love and condescension which had always heretofore characterized the society.

Green street Monthly Meeting having been long disquieted and annoyed by the menaces of the ruling orthodox party in Philadelphia Quarter, and having seen the same individuals interrupt the progress of the Yearly Meeting, and return back to Philadelphia Quarter the case relating to Green street meeting; after deliberate consideration, Green street Monthly Meeting in

the 5th month, concluded to dissolve its connexion with Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting. A minute expressive of this conclusion was made and a committee appointed to give information to the next Quarterly Meeting. This was done by one of the Friends appointed to that service, who also laid on the table a copy of the Monthly Meeting's minute on the subject, which was read. Green street Monthly Meeting having dissolved its connexion with Philadelphia Quarter, came to the conclusion to apply to Abington Quarterly Meeting to become a branch thereof; which, upon a full and deliberate expression of the sense of that meeting, was agreed to, and a copy of the minute then made by Abington Quarterly Meeting was directed to be sent to Green street Monthly Meeting, as one of its branches.

Radnor Monthly Meeting, in the succeeding month for similar reasons, and in the same way, also dissolved its connexion with Philadelphia Quarter, and became a branch of Abington.

The great pressure of the existing state of the society tended to draw the minds of Friends into near sympathy and tender feeling for one another, and thus a way opened for relief to the oppressed, on the primitive principle of love, condescension, and brotherly kindness. A number of Friends, members of Pine street Monthly

Meeting, having long considered themselves deprived of the privileges and advantages of religious society by the intolerant and overbearing disposition of the rulers of that meeting, after serious and deliberate consideration, concluded to adopt the following memorial to the Monthly Meeting.

“ Dear Friends,

In contemplating the state of things amongst us, we have been seriously affected on account of the spirit of contention that exists in our society.

It is true, circumstances have arisen that have produced divisions amongst us, and we fear feelings have been indulged which are sapping those principles of christian love and forbearance that have always united us together; and as those difficulties, in our estimation, affect our rights and our consciences, it does not seem likely that such a reconciliation can take place while we remain together, as would tend to our mutual advantage and the promotion of the cause of truth and righteousness.

It has been repeatedly urged upon us “ that a separation must take place,” that “ we can have no fellowship together,” and after much patient forbearance we are constrained to believe that this



is lamentably the case, and that the time is close at hand when a considerable portion of our members will be willing to seek a quiet retreat from those scenes of contention, which have of late interrupted the peace and harmony of our religious meetings.

In doing this, it is not our intention to remove from our places of residence, or to disunite ourselves from the society of Friends, whose fundamental doctrines we sincerely approve, and whose discipline we are desirous to observe and maintain.

With this object in view, and as members of this meeting, possessing equal rights and interests in its property, and actuated by a desire to promote liberty of conscience, and peace and good will to all; we unite in requesting an equitable division of the estate belonging to the Monthly Meeting, for the purpose of providing a meeting house and other accommodations necessary for the quiet and peaceful enjoyment of those benefits which ought to be the object of every religious association."

This memorial was signed by forty-five members, mostly heads of families, and among the most respectable persons of the meeting, and was presented in an appropriate manner to the Monthly Meeting by William Wharton, in the

5th month, 1827. It was not however permitted to be read, nor the subject matter brought into consideration, but was referred to a verbal committee for their report at a subsequent Monthly Meeting. An evident disposition appearing to treat the application with contempt, it was then asked whether certificates of membership would be granted to some other Monthly Meeting which might be disposed to receive them? This was also denied; and notwithstanding the memorial had been referred to a committee, it was made, before the return of another Monthly Meeting, the ground for official visits from the overseers to the parties concerned in it!

No hope of reconciliation remaining, the very endeavour to come to an amicable arrangement being thus construed into a cause of offence, several families transferred their right of membership to Byberry Monthly Meeting, which freely received them without certificates, and taking into view the peculiarly trying situation of Friends in the city, concluded to open an indulged Meeting for worship for their accommodation on first and fourth days. A meeting was accordingly opened under the care of a committee of Byberry Monthly Meeting, on the third of Sixth month in Carpenters' Hall; it being the same room in which the Congress of the United

States first met to devise means for delivering the country from foreign aggression.

On the 4th of Sixth month, the general conference met, agreeably to adjournment, at Green street meeting house. The conference in the Fourth month, was constituted of a large number of the representatives of the Yearly Meeting and other concerned Friends, who, by the interruption of an unbending party determined to subject every proceeding to their arbitrary rule, had been deprived of holding a Yearly Meeting, in regular order, on the principles and practice of the society, and which produced a necessity for Friends mutually to confer together in order to determine what should be done for the restoration of consistent order, in the exercise of discipline. After sufficient time for deliberate and mature consideration on the trying state of the society, the same Friends, in company with many others from all the different Quarters of the Yearly Meeting, again met in mutual sympathy to feel after any opening which might be presented in best wisdom for removing the obstructions which had taken place, to the maintenance of the accustomed relations of the society. After a time of solemn and deep feeling, a free interchange of views and sentiments on the general state of the society took place; a large committee

was appointed, some out of each Quarter, to report the particular state of all the Quarters, that the true condition of the Yearly Meeting at large might be fully understood. This committee was also charged with the consideration of the best means to be adopted for the correcting of existing abuses, and for the restoration of order and harmony. After a report on the state of the different Quarters, the committee proposed, as the result of serious and mature deliberation, that as the Yearly Meeting, at its usual time of sitting, had been so sorrowfully interrupted and disorganized, an extra session should be held in the succeeding tenth month, by such Quarterly and Monthly Meetings as might be prepared for the measure; which it was believed would have a tendency to re-settle the society in quiet and regular order, agreeably to wonted practice. This report was acceptable to Friends assembled, and the proposal unanimously adopted. A committee of forty Friends was then appointed to extend such counsel to the members in the several Quarters as their situation might require or way open for. This committee, by sub-divisions, attended meetings of conference throughout the Quarterly and most of the Monthly Meetings as they came in course, where the minds of Friends

were turned towards the re-organization of the Yearly Meeting.

A door of relief was already opened for Friends in the city, by several of the country Monthly Meetings being disposed to receive them as members without certificates, well knowing the unconstitutional and unreasonable domination the orthodox party exercised over all who could not submit to their views. Byberry Monthly Meeting had already received several families, principally from Pine street meeting, and instituted a meeting for worship for their accommodation. Darby Monthly Meeting had also received a number of families without certificates, principally from the Western Monthly Meeting, and granted them the privilege of meeting with Friends under the care of Byberry Monthly Meeting, which was cause of thankfulness to many minds who felt that they were brought under great oppression, and in danger of being trodden under the feet of those calling themselves orthodox, and who had engrossed all disciplinary power in their own hands. This indulged meeting, in the eighth month, with the consent of Byberry Monthly Meeting and Abington Quarter, resolved itself into a Monthly Meeting, as a branch of Abington Quarter, which proved an additional means of relief to many

Friends in the city, who transferred their rights of membership to it as way opened.

From the conference held in the 6th month, the following minute and epistle were issued expressive of the concern and judgment of Friends assembled.

“At a general meeting of Friends, held by adjournments, at Green Street meeting-house, in the city of Philadelphia, on the 4th. and 5th. days of the 6th month, 1827, pursuant to an adjournment in the fourth month last, the following epistle was adopted, and it was directed that seven thousand copies of it should be printed and circulated among our members. The Friends who signed the epistle were requested to attend to its early distribution.

*To Friends of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings within the compass of the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia.*

Dear Friends,

Having, through Divine favour, been permitted to meet together, pursuant to adjournment in the fourth month last, the state of our religious society was again brought into view. The wing of Ancient Goodness being sensibly extended over the several sittings of this meeting, we have been

enabled weightily to consider the subjects that came before us. After solemn deliberation, and a free interchange of sentiment, it was, with much unanimity, agreed to recommend the following views and propositions for your serious consideration.

The principal objects of our religious association, are the public worship of God; the edification and comfort of each other; the strengthening of the weak, and the recovery of those who have wandered from the way of peace and safety.

It is only under the blessed influence of gospel love that these objects can be attained. Whenever any among us, so far forsake this *fundamental principle* of our union, as to act in the spirit of strife and discord, and to oppose and condemn their brethren, who may conscientiously differ from them in opinion, they break the bond of gospel fellowship, and, as far as their influence extends, frustrate the design of religious society. If such, after the use of proper means, cannot be reclaimed, the peace, and harmony, and welfare of the body, require that they should be separated from our communion.

The apostle, aware of the evils arising from contention in religious communities, warned his brethren against it, declaring that 'where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil

work;" and they were exhorted to withdraw from every brother who walked disorderly. And we know from experience, that wherever this evil spirit has appeared in any of our meetings, weakness and jealousy, and divisions have been introduced; and that excellent order has been subverted which has not only preserved us in love and concord, but protected the rights and privileges of all our members.

With deep concern and sorrow we have observed the introduction and increase of this desolating spirit. It is now about five years since it made its appearance in our hitherto favoured society, so as to become a subject of general concern. For some time it was mostly confined to individuals acting as officers in the church. In this stage of its progress its consequences were grievous. Some who became infected by it, disregarding the wholesome order established by our Yearly Meeting, which directs, in the first place, *private* labour with such as give cause of concern, and afterwards, that *Monthly Meetings* should treat with them, formed combinations amongst themselves, unauthorized by the society and unknown to its discipline. Friends traveling in the ministry, with certificates from their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, were interrupted in their labours, and in some instances



publicly opposed in our meetings for divine worship. They and other faithful Friends in the ministry, were unjustly charged with preaching infidel doctrines, denying the Divinity of Christ, and undervaluing the scriptures; together with divers other things, generally known to you, and equally unfounded.

It was not long, however, before the contagion spread, and made its appearance in some of our meetings for discipline, opening to the exercised members of the society, scenes of the most painful nature. Measures of a party character were introduced, and the established order of society was infringed, by carrying those measures into execution, against the judgment and contrary to the voice of the larger part of Friends present.

At length the infection, taking a wider range, appeared in our Yearly Meeting, where its deplorable effects were equally conspicuous. Means were recently taken therein to over-rule the greater part of the representatives, and a clerk was imposed upon the meeting, without their concurrence or consent. A Committee was there appointed to visit the Quarterly and Monthly meetings without the unity of the meeting, and contrary to the solid sense and judgment of much the larger number of the members in attendance; and several important subjects were necessarily

dismissed, owing to the disunity and discord prevalent in that body.

Friends have viewed this state of things amongst us with deep concern and exercise, patiently waiting in the hope, that time and reflection would convince our brethren of the impropriety of such a course, and that, being favoured to see the evil consequences of such conduct, they might retrace their steps. But, hitherto, we have waited in vain. Time and opportunity for reflection have been amply afforded, but have not produced these desirable results. On the contrary, the spirit of discord and confusion has gained strength; and to us there now appears no way to regain the harmony and tranquility of the body, but by withdrawing ourselves—not from the society of Friends, nor from the exercise of its salutary discipline—but from religious communion with those who have introduced, and seem disposed to continue such disorders amongst us.

The quiet and solemnity of our meetings for divine worship—the blessings of a gospel ministry unshackled by human authority—the preservation of our religious liberty—the advancement of our christian testimonies—and the prosperity of truth, so far as it is connected with our labours, we believe, very much depend upon the early adoption of this measure.

We therefore, under a solemn and weighty sense of the importance of this concern, and with ardent desires that all our movements may be under the guidance of Him, who only can lead us in safety, have agreed to propose for your consideration, the propriety and expediency of holding a Yearly Meeting for Friends in unity with us, residing within the limits of those Quarterly Meetings, heretofore represented in the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia; for which purpose, it is recommended that Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, which may be prepared for such a measure, should appoint representatives to meet in Philadelphia, on the third second day in the tenth month next, at ten o'clock in the morning, in company with other members favourable to our views, there to hold a Yearly Meeting of men and women Friends, upon the principles of the early professors of our name, and for the same purposes that brought them together in a religious capacity—to exalt the standard of truth—promote righteousness and peace in the earth—edify the churches—and generally to attend to all such concerns as relate to the welfare of religious society, and the cause of our holy Redeemer, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the meeting by

Stephen Stephens,	John Mann,
Joseph Rhoads,	John Cowgill,
Jacob Paxson,	Robert Moore,
James Walton,	Asa Rogers,
Benjamin Smith,	Anthony Sharp,
Thomas Carey,	Josiah Roberts,
Halliday Jackson,	John Ward,
Jacob Alrichs,	Thomas Borton,
George Peirce,	David Davis,
Stephen Long,	Isaac Kay,
Richard Barnard,	Edward Garrigues.

Extracted from the minutes of the aforesaid meeting:

WILLIAM GIBBONS,	} Clerks.
BENJAMIN FERRIS.	

## CHAPTER XIV.

EXTRA SESSION OF THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS, HELD IN PHILADELPHIA, IN THE 10TH MONTH, 1827, ACCORDING TO THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE HELD ON THE 4TH AND 5TH OF THE 6TH MONTH.

The general conference in the sixth month, and the prospect of an extra session of the Yearly Meeting in the tenth month, greatly excited the animosity and censures of the orthodox party. They saw with regret a door opening by which those of their brethren whom they had marked for a prey, would escape out of their hands. The Friends who had transferred their right of membership to Byberry and Darby Monthly Meetings, were placed entirely beyond the reach of those individuals who controled the meetings with which they had been connected. Byberry and Darby Monthly Meetings possessed equal rights, privileges, and independence with any other meetings belonging to the Yearly Meeting, and every

member of those meetings was fully entitled to these rights and privileges. Pine street and the Western Monthly Meetings, when they were entire, had no paramount right over any other Monthly Meeting. They could not enter the threshold of any other Monthly Meeting, and say we claim a right to deal with, and disown your members, whatever might be the ostensible charge. Or upon the same principle other Monthly Meetings might enter Pine street or the Western Monthly Meeting and say, some of your members in our apprehension have been acting inconsistent with the nature of our principles and practice, and we disown them from the rights and privileges of the society. Would such disownments be deemed valid by any reasonable person? How much less were the censures of Pine street and the Western Meetings valid when both of them had been broken down by disunion, and only a fractional part remained to exercise the functions of those meetings? The disownments attempted against those Friends who had transferred their rights to Byberry and Darby Monthly Meetings, could not penetrate through the shield of those meetings, which afforded equal protection to all the members. They stood protected in the bosom of society notwithstanding the menaces of their orthodox opposers.

The dominant party in Pine street and the Western meetings had departed from the disciplinary principle of the society, and trampled under foot its essential attributes, equality, unity and concurrence. Byberry and Darby Monthly Meetings, animated with the kindred feelings of christian love, sympathy, and condescension, extended a helping hand to those of their brethren thus brought into unmerited bondage. Their affectionate kindness, in rescuing their suffering brethren from the grasp of individuals who had so long afforded painful evidence of their departure from the unity of the society, involved no direliction from correct principles. These Monthly Meetings were moreover sustained, in the exercise of their kindness to many tried members, by the approbation of their Quarterly Meetings. Abington Quarterly Meeting, upon the same principle of love and sympathy, received into its connexion both Green street and Rannor Monthly Meetings, and hence these two meetings, as also the newly established Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, under the protection, and as constituent branches of Abington Quarterly Meeting, retained their position, and all their rights and privileges as component parts of the re-organized Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia, which met according to the recommendation of the general conference.

On the 15th of 10th mo. 1827, about 10 o'clock, men Friends assembled in the capacity of a Yearly Meeting, in a large temporary building erected for the purpose, and women Friends in Green street meeting-house. It was estimated that nearly fifteen hundred men Friends were in attendance, and a sensible solemnity and tender feeling being experienced, the meeting appeared to be owned by the Head of the church. The mutual sympathies of Friends extended to one another, and they mingled in tender fellowship, in which gratitude was breathed to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, that the sincere and tender in heart were permitted again to mingle in a church capacity for transacting the business of a Yearly Meeting.

Representatives were called from Abington, Bucks, Concord, the Western, and Southern Quarterly Meetings, and also from Mount Holly, Chesterfield, and Radnor Monthly Meetings.

The following abstract of the minutes adopted on this solemn occasion will exhibit the nature of the concerns which engaged the attention of Friends.

After calling the representatives, the attention of the meeting was turned to its component parts, as well as to the trying situation of many Friends in Quarterly Meetings not represented.

“The committee appointed at a general meeting of Friends, held in Philadelphia, in the 6th



month last, to attend to the state of society, and to afford assistance to Friends under suffering, within the compass of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, submitted a report in writing, as follows:

‘To the Yearly Meeting,

The committee appointed at the general meeting of Friends, held at Green street, on the 5th of 6th month last, report,

That agreeably to the direction of said meeting, we have given such aid and counsel to Friends, as their situation appeared to us to require, and as way from time to time opened. In attention to the subject, the committee have met five times in this city, and at different times have appointed a part of their number, to attend such meetings of conference as were to be held in various parts of the Yearly Meeting; by whose report it has appeared, that these were generally satisfactory and useful opportunities.

From information received, the views and propositions contained in the epistle of the sixth month last, appear to be more extensively united with than was anticipated, and we believe the important concern, which has for its object the peace and harmony of Society, is yet progressing.

Signed on behalf of the committee,

John Mann,      John Comly,

Robert Moore,      John Ward,

*Philadelphia, 10th mo. 15th 1827.*

Second-day afternoon.

A weighty concern for the welfare of our fellow members in the different parts of this Yearly Meeting, and a tender sympathy with them in their various trials and afflictions, spreading and prevailing over the meeting, it was concluded to appoint a committee to take into view the general state of society, and to report to a future sitting of this meeting, as way may open, what in their judgment may tend to promote the welfare of the body. A committee was then appointed.

16th. of the month, and 3d of the week.

The committee appointed yesterday, to take into view the state of society, and to lay before the meeting what they may deem necessary for the welfare of the body, offered the following proposal: viz.

‘The numerous difficulties under which our members are suffering, in different places and in different departments of society, coming into view and obtaining our deliberate attention, it was thought proper to propose to the Yearly Meeting, whether it would not be right to appoint a large committee of men and women Friends, to represent this meeting in its recess, and attend to the very important concerns which at present claim, or may hereafter claim, the care and assistance of the body.’

The concern expressed in the said proposal being united with by the meeting, a committee was appointed, to produce to a future sitting the names of suitable Friends for that service.

Third-day afternoon.

A tender concern for the situation of our absent brethren and sisters within the compass of this Yearly Meeting, and a fellow-feeling with them under their manifold trials, being expressed and pervading the meeting, a committee was named, to prepare, if way should open, an essay of an epistle addressed to the Quarterly, Monthly, and Particular meetings, and produce it to a future sitting of this meeting."

The meeting's attention being drawn to the situation of the meeting of Ministers and Elders, it was with much unanimity recommended that Friends in those stations should meet in a Yearly Meeting capacity on the next morning, and sit, as heretofore, on its own adjournments.

"17th of the month, and 4th of the week.

The Friends appointed to nominate a committee, to represent this meeting in its recess and attend to the various important concerns connected with the welfare of society, at present claiming or that may hereafter claim the care of Friends, produced a report, which being considered is united with, and the committee therein nomina-

ted are requested to give diligent attention to the weighty subjects now committed to their care, and report to our next Yearly Meeting.

Fifth-day afternoon.

The committee appointed on Third day last to draught an epistle to our absent brethren and sisters, within the compass of this Yearly Meeting, produced an essay, which, being deliberately read, was adopted. The general committee appointed yesterday are desired to have 10,000 copies of it printed and distributed to our Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, in such proportions as they may deem proper.

19th of the month, and 6th of the week.

The Friends appointed to draught an epistle to our brethren and sisters of Baltimore Yearly Meeting, produced an essay, which, having been deliberately considered by the meeting, is united with.

The Friends to whom was referred the consideration of a suitable time to hold the next session of this Yearly Meeting, proposed the second Second-day in the Fourth month next, the Meeting for Ministers and Elders on the Seventh-day preceding, both to begin at 10 o'clock in the morning: which being united with by the meeting was adopted.

Having been favoured, through the unmerited

mercy of the Head of the church, to witness in the several sittings of this meeting, the baptizing influence of his own blessed spirit cementing us together in the bond of Gospel love, and enabling us to conduct the weighty affairs of the church in much brotherly affection and harmony, and feeling grateful for the favour, the meeting concludes, to meet again on the second Second-day of the Fourth month next, if the Lord permit.

Taken from the minutes of the aforesaid Yearly Meeting and signed on behalf thereof.

Benjamin Ferris, Clerk."

The following is the Epistle alluded to in the preceding extract.

*An Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in Philadelphia by adjournments, from the 15th of the tenth month to the 19th of the same, inclusive, 1827, to the Quarterly, Monthly, and Particular meetings of Friends within the compass of the said Yearly Meeting.*

Dear Friends,

Having convened in this Yearly Meeting, under very peculiar and trying circumstances, in order to transact the business of the church, our minds have been comforted and strengthened, in the evidence afforded that we are still mercifully regard-

ed by our Holy Head, whose heavenly wing has graciously overshadowed this meeting to the humbling of our spirits; and tender sympathy has flowed towards our absent brethren and sisters, whom we affectionately salute in the love of the everlasting gospel.

We fervently desire that all may be increasingly concerned to retire from the noises, the contentions, and the confusions that are in the world—that we may individually submit to the government of the Prince of Peace, who gathered our forefathers to be a people and committed to them important testimonies.

These testimonies have been felt to be near and dear to us, and a living travail has been known that our Zion may arise and shine in her ancient brightness, as in the morning of the day, when her sons and her daughters were despised and persecuted, yet inherited the blessing pronounced by our Divine Master: “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for my sake.”

Beloved friends, we feel the awful responsibility of our present standing, and the necessity of abiding, individually, in the meekness and simplicity of the truth as it is Jesus—avoiding all doubtful disputations which engender strife, and earnestly

endeavouring to show forth by a Godly life and conversation, that we are his humble followers, who “when he was reviled, reviled not again,” and whose religion enjoins that we resist not evil, but overcome evil with good.

We believe there never was a period in our society, when it was more important for those who feel bound to the law and the testimony to stand faithful at their posts; having on “the whole armour of God,” which only can protect from the dangers that surround us. But if we keep a single eye to the Captain of our salvation, humbly waiting for him to put forth and go before us, we have nothing to fear—hard things will be made easy, and bitter things sweet; for “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

In the present agitated state of society, its living members must be led into exercise and suffering: and we earnestly desire that all may be preserved in the spirit of patience, gentleness, and forbearance, under every provocation and trial. And in the exercise of the salutary discipline of the church, Oh! that we may seek for a right qualification to treat with offenders in the spirit of restoring love,—most carefully guarding against the influence of party feeling, which may, almost imperceptibly, entwine itself in movements professedly designed to support the discipline of society.

Let us remember that its original and primary object is, to seek and to save—not to destroy. If we in a spirit of violence seize the discipline as a sword, to be wielded in the will and wisdom of man, we thereby depart from our ancient and Christian principle, and wound the cause of truth and righteousness.

Our profession is high and holy; and let us be increasingly concerned to walk consistently therewith. The patient sufferings of our faithful predecessors finally established for them an excellent name, even amongst their persecutors. They held up with *practical* clearness a peaceable testimony against “wars and fightings,” and by a scrupulous adherence to the principles of justice, became proverbial for their integrity.

In the present afflicting state of things, we feel deeply concerned that their example in these respects may be kept steadily in view—that our religious testimonies may never be wounded by contending for property and asserting our rights;—that no course be pursued, although sanctioned by the laws of the excellent civil government under which we live, that may be at variance with the spirit of that holy Lawgiver, who taught his disciples, “If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also;” and who set forth his own situation as it related to



this world when he said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head."

And we tenderly exhort, that in places where our members constitute the larger part of any meeting, their conduct may be regulated by the rule laid down by our blessed Lord: "Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

The discipline under which we act, positively discourages members of our society from suing each other at law. To violate this discipline in a meeting capacity, is not only a departure from our established order, but is calculated to injure us in the eyes of sober inquirers after truth, and to disturb the peace of our own minds.

Dearly beloved young friends! how shall we address you in language sufficiently expressive of the tender solicitude which we feel for your welfare! We are fully aware that many of you have witnessed scenes of contention, painfully affecting to the inexperienced mind, and calculated to produce the inquiry, "Who shall show us any good?" But remember, dear children, that truth is truth though all men forsake it. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." Although there may have been seasons when, as amidst the raging

of the billows, you have been ready to cry out, Lord save us or we perish, yet may you remember that the Almighty power which rebuked the winds and the waves, is the same that ever it was, and is still graciously disposed to say to the humble tossed mind, "Peace, be still."

Retire then, we entreat you, from all airy speculations on religious subjects—from all light and chaffy conversation. Enter into your closets—shut the door—commune with your own hearts and be still. Thus you will learn in the school of Christ. Your religious experience will be gradually enlarged, and as you continue humble and obedient you will be raised up a righteous generation, and will stand as faithful advocates for the law and the testimony of our God. There will arise from amongst you judges as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning: instead of the fathers there will be the sons, and instead of the mothers there will be the daughters.

The language of the Meeting for Sufferings, in the introduction to the Book of Advices published under the direction of our Yearly Meeting in 1808, appears peculiarly adapted to our present situation, and is as follows:

"The following extracts have been compiled for the benefit of the members of our Yearly Meeting, that observing the travail of the church

under various concerns, which in divine wisdom have been communicated for its weighty attention, they may be drawn to the principle of life and light manifested in the mind, which points out the path of duty and can alone preserve therein.

Our ancient Friends and their faithful successors to the present day, have earnestly laboured to turn the attention of all to this pure spirit; knowing from experience, that it is the means appointed by God for effecting our salvation, and the only foundation of all true religion and worship. As by this we have been led into divers testimonies which have distinguished us from most other professors of the Christian name, we fervently desire that all our members may walk by the same rule and mind the same thing; thus every one filling his place in the body, we shall grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ."

We recommend these advices to the weighty attention of all our members.

Finally, beloved friends, may we all remember that the gospel of Christ stands not in speculative opinions, nor in the will and wisdom of man, but in the power of the one true and living God. Our blessed Lord gave ample proof of its simplicity, in selecting illiterate fishermen to be

amongst its promulgators. And as we are engaged humbly to abide in this power, no divination nor enchantment can prevail against us.

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Signed by direction and on behalf of the meeting, by

**BENJAMIN FERRIS,**  
*Clerk of the men's meeting.*

**REBECCA B. COMLY,**  
*Clerk of the women's meeting.*

## CHAPTER XV.

## YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS HELD IN PHILADELPHIA IN THE 4TH MONTH, 1828.

Every step that opened for the relief of the oppressed, and the re-organization of the society, tending to diminish the influence of those called orthodox, the leaders of that party seemed to become violent in proportion to the apparent shortness of their power. The rights of several individuals, so far as they could affect them, had already been sacrificed to party resentment, and all who had attended any conference, or the Yearly Meeting in the tenth month, were deemed objects of immediate censure. The calm and deliberate progress of Friends to resume their just rights in the transaction of the affairs of the Yearly Meeting, was denominated "dividing society" and "setting up a new society." These charges were in accordance with the whole assumed proceedings of the orthodox brethren. The true cause of division had long been in operation, by the orthodox members assuming

in their own persons the rights of many of their brethren of equal standing and fully entitled to every privilege in the society with themselves. From a careful inquiry it does not appear that more than about one in six members have adhered to the orthodox party, and a large number of those who still adhere to them, do not approve of their past proceedings. Was it reasonable that one orthodox member should despoil five of his fellow members, and engross their rights in his own? When these five members recurred to fundamental principles and resumed their disciplinary functions, and reduced the one who had lorded over them to his just level, was this dividing any thing from him that he ought of right to retain? This cannot be said either with reason or justice.

We have seen the representatives and other concerned Friends, in consequence of being interrupted in the fulfilment of their duties by the overbearing determination of the orthodox party, compelled to resolve themselves into a deliberative body of conferees to consider what was to be done to relieve society from the incumbrance of party strife and measures.

These, in exhibiting the true state of the case, appealed to the Yearly Meeting at large through the medium of a solemn epistle, inviting the at-

tention of all to a general conference to be held in the sixth month, that the mind and sense of the whole body might be known and acted upon, in conformity with the established practice of Friends. Was there any thing dividing in this, when all were freely and openly invited? Could there be any thing of a party nature in it when all had a voice in deliberating, and nothing was determined but by entire unity? The voice of the members of the Yearly Meeting, through a general conference, called for an extra session, in the tenth month “upon the principles of the early professors of our name, and for the same purposes that brought them together in a religious capacity—to exalt the standard of truth—promote righteousness and peace in the earth—edify the churches—and generally, to attend to all such concerns as relate to the welfare of religious society, and the cause of our holy Redeemer, who is God over all blessed forever.”

There was no new ground taken; no new pretensions claimed, nor any rash declarations made. What cause is there from all this, to make the charge of “dividing society,” or “setting up a new society?” Nothing to warrant the charge any where appears. The orthodox party had divided themselves from the body, and Friends in recurring to fundamental principle realized

primitive practice; they moved harmoniously, without a dissenting voice, to re-organize the Yearly Meeting upon the principles of the society, freed from the incumbrance of such as had relinquished in their practice those principles.

The Yearly Meeting held in the tenth month had been greatly to the comfort and encouragement of Friends, embracing nearly as many members as usually attend Yearly Meetings. In the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings represented, the measure was strongly contested by the committees of the orthodox party, and it was entirely at the will of those meetings to receive or reject the authority of orthodox claims. Friends of Abington, Bucks, Western, and Southern Quarters, were generally, with little exception, prepared to adopt the recommendation of the conference. Concord Quarter was also prepared, but had to contend with more opposition; and although Philadelphia was not formally represented yet a large number, perhaps more than half of the members who usually had attended were embraced in the tenth month Yearly Meeting. Caln, Burlington, Haddonfield, Salem, and Shrewsbury and Rahway Quarters severally acknowledged the re-organized Yearly Meeting, by the reception of the general epistle, and by appointing representatives to its adjourned session to be held on



the second Second-day of the 4th month, 1828, notwithstanding all the efforts of the orthodox party to retain them under their influence. In all of these meetings the orthodox members are understood to have withdrawn from Friends and maintain meetings of their own, which certainly places them in the situation of *separatists*—a name which they so freely bestow on Friends. The full knowledge of the mind and will of the body of society ought certainly to convince the most determined of the orthodox party, that their pretensions to power over the society never can be sustained. The principal body is already freed from their control, and it is unavailing to indulge in invective and ineffective censure.

Friends, through many deep exercises for the restoration of that order which binds together in feelings of christian love, have sympathised with many of their opposing brethren, and have wished to make their way as easy as possible, and to prevent whatever might operate as a future discouragement of their cordial return to the bosom of society. There is no disciplinary step taken in regard to those who have withdrawn from it. All who are members of the society may claim their rights to be recognized by Friends.\* How

\* It may perhaps be considered an exception to this, that in one or two instances Monthly Meetings have made a record in

can it then be said that they have set up a new society, when they are willing to retain as members all who are within the limits of this Yearly Meeting and who are disposed to act in accordance with the legitimate principles of the society of Friends? Were not the different Quarterly Meetings in the full exercise of their independence and judiciary functions when they appointed representatives to the re-organized Yearly Meeting? Did they not retain their usual position as a medium between the Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting? What infraction then does the discipline assert, was made on the regular and legal operation of the Yearly Meeting by a concentration of all the Monthly Meetings incorporated in the regular Quarterly Meetings which convened agreeably to the previously declared will of the body, on the second Second-day of 4th month, 1828. The different Quarters met at their usual time and place and received from the Monthly Meetings answers to the queries, and, as the regular medium, transmitted them to the

relation to those who have separated from them, expressing that they considered such separation by this party equivalent to a relinquishment of membership in those meetings. But no decision of this kind has been come to by the society in its collective capacity: and we are well assured that no difficulty would be made, in the instances mentioned, to the return of those orthodox individuals, nor would any humiliating acknowledgments be required of them.

Yearly Meeting; exhibiting a regular re-organization on the fundamental principle of equal rights, guaranteed by the exercise of love and consistent concurrence.

How different is the real state of the case in regard to the orthodox Quarterly Meetings. They have not a Quarter in the Yearly Meeting but which has been formed of a small fractional part of the original members, who in every instance, except that of Philadelphia, withdrew from Friends regularly met at the usual time and place.

It is true, in some instances the clerks withdrew with the books, but this infraction of good order on their part, could not invalidate the regular Quarterly Meeting, nor legalize a third or fourth part of the members into a regular new Quarter, much less supersede the sober and consistent exercise of the functions of the Quarterly Meeting, composed of the greater part of the members. The plain truth is, the orthodox party in Philadelphia, by a long course of exclusive party action, had separated themselves from the general body of Friends, and by their influence a small fractional part of the country Quarters, (except the Southern,) adhering to them, were encouraged to separate from Friends and resolve themselves into the appearance of Quarterly Meetings to keep up a shadow of power and

maintain an appearance of the Yearly Meeting, when the body of the members in the accustomed relations of society were moving in their usual course. These are facts which must stand unalterable, when prevarication and falsehood shall have entirely passed away. How unwise and frivolous to seek to prolong a selfish importance by misrepresentation which must ultimately vanish into thin air.

The society of Friends having passed through the present ordeal of purification, the principles and testimonies they have been called to bear, will, under the guidance of Truth, progress through future generations with increasing brightness, when all the doings of orthodoxy shall have settled in oblivion.

*Extracts from the minutes of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia by adjournments, from the 14th of the Fourth month, to the 18th of the same, inclusive, 1828.*

“The representatives from all the Quarters in the Yearly Meeting, except Philadelphia, being called were nearly all present, for the absence of most of those who did not answer to their names, satisfactory reasons were assigned.

An epistle addressed to this meeting by the

Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Baltimore, was received and read; its lively pertinent contents were truly consolatory and acceptable to this meeting.

Second-day afternoon.

The minutes of the general committee appointed in the tenth month last, to represent this Yearly Meeting in its recess, were now read. The account of their labours was satisfactory to the meeting.

15th of the month, and 3rd of the week.

By the report from Abington Quarterly Meeting, it appears, that, with its approbation, a meeting for worship, with a Preparative and Monthly Meeting had been settled in Philadelphia. The latter is designated 'The Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia,' and is held on the fourth day of the week preceding the last sixth day but one in each month. The meetings for worship on first and fourth days in each week. Those held on first day mornings, and on fourth days, begin at 10 o'clock. An afternoon meeting is held on first days, beginning in the winter season at 3 o'clock, and in summer at 4 o'clock.

Having entered into the consideration of the state of our religious society, so far as the same has been brought into view by the answers to the queries, the meeting was engaged in a living

concern and travail for the removal of existing weaknesses amongst us, and for the promotion of the cause of truth and righteousness.

Fourth-day afternoon.

The following proposition was contained in the report from Abington Quarterly Meeting: to wit, that a Quarterly Meeting, to be composed of Radnor, Green street, and Philadelphia Monthly Meetings, be established and held in Philadelphia, on the third day of the week, following the first second-day, in the second, fifth, eighth, and eleventh months. A meeting of the Ministers and Elders belonging to the said meeting, to be held on the day preceding—to be denominated, ‘Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting of Friends,’—to be opened in the eighth month next, the meetings to begin at 10 o’clock in the morning; which on solid deliberation was united with by this meeting: and being informed that the women’s meeting have also united with the proposition, a committee was appointed to attend the opening of the said meeting, and report to our next Yearly Meeting.

17th of the month, and 5th of the week.

It being deemed necessary that a committee should be appointed to represent this meeting in its recess, and to have a general care of such concerns as are connected with the welfare of

society, during the ensuing year, a committee was appointed for that purpose, to report to our next Yearly Meeting.

18th of the month and 6th of the week.

Having been favoured, through the several sittings of this meeting, with renewed evidences of the mercy and goodness of our Heavenly Father, uniting us together in the cementing love of the gospel, in which the business that came before us has been transacted with much harmony and condescension: under a lively sense of gratitude for the blessing, the meeting concludes, to meet again, with divine permission, on the second second-day in the fourth month next, the Meeting of Ministers and Elders on the seventh day preceding, both to begin at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Extracted from the minutes of the aforesaid Yearly Meeting, and signed on behalf thereof.

BENJAMIN FERRIS, Clerk."

From a review of the deliberate proceedings of the re-organized Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia, and from a consideration of the subject matter set forth in the epistles which have been inserted, the impartial reader must perceive that the charges of unsoundness and deviation from discipline, so strongly insisted upon

by the orthodox leaders against Friends, are the effect of party zeal acting on individuals, and disposing them to traduce those whom they can no longer control. Friends were painfully constrained to move in the way that opened, to free the society from the contention and distraction of a party spirit settled in its own determinations. The deliberate and cautious, the temperate and firm conduct of Friends in resuming their just rights, was accompanied with great solemnity and tenderness of feeling, and no harsh reflections were indulged in, against those who had produced the painful and trying state of the society. The object was, to regain consistent order and harmony, in transacting the business of our religious society, and not to extend censure to the orthodox members, or to deprive them of any privileges which they held in common with their brethren.



## CHAPTER XVI.

CASES RESULTING FROM THE RE-ORGANIZATION  
OF THE YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS HELD  
• IN PHILADELPHIA.

The committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting in the 4th month last, attended the opening of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting of Friends on the 5th of 8th month, at Cherry street meeting-house, which was composed of Radnor, Green street, and Philadelphia Monthly Meetings,\* and was large and satisfactory, many minds being humbled under a sense of the superintending care of the Head of the church in thus opening a way for rebuilding the waste places, and restoring all the branches of the Yearly Meeting to their regular operation.

The full re-organization of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in all its branches, within the short period of sixteen months, notwithstanding the exertions of the orthodox members to oppose it,

\* The Monthly Meeting held at Roaring Creek, became a branch of the Quarterly Meeting in 11th month following.

has greatly exceeded the expectations of Friends, and induces many to say: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

As the orthodox brethren dispute the legality of the re-organization of the Yearly Meeting, and predicate upon this ground the propriety of their attempts to disown and deprive the greater part of the society of all right in its property, it may be useful a little further to examine this subject.

In joining issue with objectors on the ground of legal order, does it not appear that the orthodox party were the aggressors?—The professedly most free and liberal deliberative body on earth was interrupted in its progress, by a clerk, as the organ of that party, assuming the direction of its business in opposition to the general sense of the body, and the meeting was thereby rendered incompetent to adjust the difficulties and redress the grievances of the Quarterly Meetings, brought before it. Placed in this predicament, what was the proper duty of the representatives, and other concerned Friends? Would it have been proper or necessary to surrender the rights and liberties of the society into the hands of self-important individuals who had no more right than others? In this case the constitutional powers of the Yearly Meeting would have been turned backward to destroy its

own order. Would it have been consistent to have contended with the orthodox party in their own temper and spirit? What then would have become of the peaceable testimony of the society! Taking into view the duties of the representatives and other Friends, as religious men desirous to maintain the order and consistency of the society, there was, under all the circumstances of the case, no other course left than to re-organize the Yearly Meeting on primitive principles and practice.

This was not rashly and immediately done; but with that caution and deliberation which have always been a distinguishing characteristic in the proceedings of the society, the larger part of the representatives, in conference with other concerned Friends, seriously and solemnly addressed the whole Yearly Meeting on the actual state of things. There could be no party design nor over-reaching in this deliberate step, for the body at large was invited to consider and judge for itself, and at an appointed future time, to express its judgment and will. As Friends had adopted no new views either in doctrine or practice, the deliberate will of the body was, to resume the exercise of its unalienable rights and accustomed relations.

The holding of an extra session of the Yearly

Meeting in the 10th month, was ultimately approved and sanctioned by all the Quarters, in their regular and deliberate capacity, except Philadelphia, a large proportion of the members of which were previously connected with Abington. Where then is the ground for the allegation, that the reorganization of the Yearly Meeting was illegal, and that it is not the society of Friends? What is the actual state in point of feeling and choice, of the members of the Yearly Meeting at large on this question?

By authentic information from the different Quarters of the Yearly Meeting, it appears that there are about five Friends to one orthodox member; and it is, moreover, well known, that a considerable number of families and individuals still adhering, through indecision of mind and other causes, to the orthodox ranks, do not cordially approve of their past proceedings nor present policy. The real number of individuals settled in the principles and pretensions of the orthodox party is believed to be very small. It has already been stated, from an intimate knowledge of the progress of the party, that four or five individuals have been the prime movers, and remain to be the principal directors of those measures which have separated them and their adherents from the unity of Friends. But ad-

mitting that all who adhere to the orthodox party were decided and settled in their choice, there would be about twenty thousand Friends to four thousand orthodox members in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. If then each part has had a deliberate choice for itself, it cannot be difficult to decide which is legally entitled to be the society. The orthodox party, by their own choice and measures, have placed themselves in the situation of a small fractional minority. Is it reasonable or just that this fractional part should assume the attributes of the society, and defraud the body not only of its name but of its property? With equal propriety and justice the small fractional part of American citizens, who, during the revolution, under the name of royalists, adhered to the British interest, might have said that they were in fact solely the American people, and that the general population of the United States was nothing but a banditti, the refuse of all other nations, and that they being the faithful subjects of the king, were entitled to the revenues of the country.

But to take a closer view of the subject, it is distinctly known that all the Quarters composing the Yearly Meeting retained their position, and continue in the occupancy of Friends, with the exception of Philadelphia Quarter. With this single exception, all these component parts of

the Yearly Meeting, in their official capacity as Quarterly Meetings, chose to be free and remain in the exercise of their just rights. In this choice and determination of the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, nothing was imposed on the orthodox brethren. In fact nothing new was adopted or practised. The whole amount of the determination of Friends in their respective regular meetings was, we will not surrender our religious liberties and the liberties of our children into the hands of a few assuming brethren. We neither ask nor take any thing from them as members of the society, but in the exercise of our christian duties we invite them to a participation of our common privileges. The orthodox party were not willing to be reduced to their just level, or mingle on the ground of equality in the ranks of their brethren, but dissented in the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings from the unity of the body; and rather than be satisfied with an equal voice in the government of the society, they set up separate meetings for discipline, that they might maintain a show of power or supremacy over their brethren.

In many instances the dissenting members from the regular meetings were few in number and had no other ground to stand on in their separate capacity than their own will, nor any other sanc-

tion from the society than the influence and direction of the self-nominated committee already alluded to, whose object was to maintain a party to support them in their disorderly pretensions. This committee could give no other power than they possessed. All their power consisted in assumption. They were an association of individuals, and possessed no other power than individual right of opinion. That opinion was rejected by the regular meetings, and of course went for nothing. Withdrawing from these meetings with those they could influence to follow them, was a direct infraction of order, and a visible act of insubordination to the will of the body. Of course these separate meetings have nothing to rest on but the opinion or will of those individuals who constitute them. They have violated their legal connexion with the society of Friends. They have dissented from that society, and cannot reasonably exercise any of its functions. They occupy the ground of their own choice, and are entitled to all the enjoyments within their reach, but have no authority to interfere with others in the exercise of equal rights and enjoyments. The pretensions of the orthodox meetings in undertaking to disown Friends, have no other foundation than their own will. Having voluntarily burst the bond of religious union,

they can have no human nor legal right to interrupt the enjoyment of Friends who are embodied in their regular meetings according to the accustomed operations of the society.

If the orthodox party have outwitted themselves, and by their own measures lost all claim upon the society, according to the principles of human or legal association; they appear also to have forfeited the weight of spiritual sanction in regard to their disciplinary proceedings against Friends. It has been a received principle of action in the society, that the discipline should be administered "in the peaceable spirit and wisdom of Jesus," for the restoration of offenders, and not as an instrument to destroy and cut off. Will the active agents of orthodox zeal say that they are under the influence and direction of the gospel spirit in obtruding their formal notifications of unfounded and libellous charges against their innocent and upright neighbours, and in undertaking, after a round of visits equally formal and impertinent, to excommunicate whole meetings. If they have neither human right nor spiritual sanction for such procedure, their practice seems to approach to a very daring presumption, and will be felt in all its weight, when the query comes to be raised in their minds, who has required this at your hands?



Orthodox members in the country, while engaged in carrying on their system of disownment, have acknowledged that they were directed to do so by the leaders of the party in Philadelphia, as a preliminary step to obtain the property of the society. Truly a righteous cause!—to divest twenty thousand of their fellow-members of their religious and civil rights whilst living, and deny them the right of interment when dead! How dreadful is the exterminating spirit of orthodoxy. The most hostile belligerents will suspend the desolations of war to bury their dead, and mingle sympathies over the graves of their compatriots; but the corroding irritation of religious prejudice withers every sensibility of the human heart.

The claim of the orthodox party to the property of the society of Friends is not a conjecture or surmise. Their motto on this subject is “all or none.” Their actual proceedings in relation to the Asylum for the relief of persons deprived of the use of their reason; and the prosecutions brought against Friends with the view of depriving them of the equal use of the burial grounds in this city, show beyond all doubt that their disposition to engross the rights and property of the society is only limited by their power.

The association of the contributors to the Asy-

lum for the relief of persons deprived of the use of their reason, was formed a few years ago, and went into operation on its own private funds, which form a property distinct from any other of the society. The estate of the contributors for the purposes of the institution, is held in trust by twelve of the members appointed at an annual or special meeting, and the object of the association is carried into effect by a board of twenty managers, a treasurer and clerk, who are chosen annually from amongst the contributors. "Any Monthly Meeting belonging to the Yearly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia, contributing two hundred dollars, may appoint an agent who may appear and act at the meetings of the association on their behalf, and may recommend one poor patient at one time on the lowest terms of admission; and every individual subscribing six dollars per annum, or twenty-five dollars at one time, and being and continuing members of the religious society of Friends, are considered members of the association; and those paying twenty-five dollars in one payment may recommend one poor patient at one time on the lowest terms of admission."

Previous to the annual meeting of the contributors in the third month, 1828, great pains were taken to induce the clerk to notify only the ortho-

dox party. A majority of the contributors being Friends, it was determined to deprive them of their rights. The clerk however would not in any way conspire to deprive his fellow-members of their rights and interests in the institution, but notified all the members on his list according to usual practice. To aid the design of depriving Friends of their rights in the association the orthodox managers obtained a legal opinion to cover their attempt. This opinion is predicated on the presumption that the constitutional powers, functions, and attributes of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting are concentrated and vested in the orthodox party. Take away this foundation and all the details of legal argument fall to the ground. So far are the orthodox party from being the Yearly Meeting of Friends that they are only a minority of that body, and have in fact separated themselves from it by promoting measures opposed to the general voice of the Yearly Meeting at large. In proof of this fact we need only refer to the report of the orthodox appointed as managers last spring, in which is a list of new agents for Monthly Meetings, fourteen of which have been set up, in opposition to the long established and regular Monthly Meetings, by a very few families who have seceded from the judgment and

will of their respective meetings.\* These opposition meetings, as we have seen, have no other sanction than the mere will of the orthodox themselves, which cannot be binding on the Yearly meeting, nor affect the rights and interests of its members. The orthodox party in the sovereignty of their will profess to have laid down Byberry and Horsham Monthly Meetings, although it is well known that there are only three or four families who have seceded from the former, and very few from the latter, and hence they pretend that the rights of these Monthly Meetings, in the association of contributors, are by the mere dicta of orthodoxy extinguished, or transferred to the few families who have seceded from them.

The whole of the families in the fourteen separated meetings which have appointed new agents, do not probably amount altogether to more than the number of families in Byberry and Horsham regular Monthly Meetings, which are said to be laid down, yet on account of this small number of persons, fourteen regular Monthly Meetings are attempted to be deprived by the orthodox party of their just rights and agency in the association. To ensure the fulfilment of this intention, at the last annual meeting of the con-

\* See the Annual Report of the orthodox managers, for 1828.

tributors, a list of seventy-six contributors, all of the orthodox party, was laid on the table with the design of adding them to the list of members, in order to ensure a majority of orthodox, and accordingly control the proceedings of the meeting.

Of these new contributors it is known that some, and it is believed not a few, were made such without expense or any particular agency of their own, further than their simple consent to *meet* in that capacity at the appointed time, and *exercise the functions of contributors!*

The clerk apprehending this measure was unprecedented and unfair, declined to accept of this list, and the determination of the orthodox to force it upon the association, causing considerable disorder and confusion, he thought best to adjourn the meeting, and having read a minute accordingly, retired; Friends generally retiring also.

After the clerk withdrew, the orthodox party pursued their own exclusive measures, which being entirely of a party character cannot in justice be binding on the association, nor affect the rights of contributors. From a review of this transaction every one will draw his own conclusion. It certainly exhibited a degree of political manoeuvring which ill accords with

those maxims of moral equity which the society of Friends has always strenuously inculcated, and exemplified in all its public transactions. Were such proceedings to obtain legal sanction and become binding, no institution in the community, embracing joint interests, would be safe.

It is difficult to conceive upon what religious, moral, or civil principle, the orthodox party ground their exclusive claim to the property of the society, when we take into view their relative numbers throughout the Yearly Meeting. How can one right extinguish or absorb five equal rights? One says to five, you are unsound in the faith, I therefore disown you and take your share of the property. But where is the evidence of this unsoundness? No new declaration of faith has been made. It is not necessary any should be made. What right has one, under equal circumstances, to interfere with or demand of the five a declaration of their faith? May they not justly retort upon the one, and demand his right and authority for such an unreasonable assumption in claiming to lord over their consciences, seeing he is in respect to right and liberty of conscience on a level with each of themselves. Will the unfounded charges of one against the five take from the rights of the latter or add to the right of the former? Does not the very attempt of the one

involve him in just censure, leaving the five to hold the even tenor of their way in the enjoyment of their legal rights?

It is probable the love of power which so often prevails over both the understanding and affections of the human mind, superinduces the leaders of the orthodox party to maintain their claim to the property of the society of Friends. Perhaps they apprehend that their importance as individuals, and even their existence as a distinct body depend upon the establishment of their title to the property of the society. An inordinate self-love, however, will not justify dereliction from principle, nor sanction the invasion of the rights and enjoyments of others. Because these orthodox leaders have forgot their own standing, and by different causes and various means, have assumed a position to demand the unconditional control of the society, are they entitled not only to the high consideration and submissive obedience of their fellow members, equal in rights with themselves, but also to all the rights, functions, and property of the society? Have these men any valid right to say to the society, if you will not quietly follow our direction, we in our wisdom and power will deprive you of your accustomed religious rights and of all interest in your property as a religious body; we will take away

your name amongst men, cast you out when dead, and repress the extendings of every mercy towards you? Such is the formidable attitude the proceedings of the leading orthodox brethren present to the society of Friends.

The prosecutions instituted against Friends respecting the burial ground are before the public and speak for themselves. The active leaders of the orthodox party, having of their own mere motion laid down Green street Monthly Meeting on paper, conceived the design of sanctioning their unwarrantable attempt by shutting the gates of the burial ground against the members of that meeting, which had an equal joint right in the property with the other four Monthly Meetings in the city. Green street Monthly Meeting being satisfied it had done nothing to invalidate its religious rights, and that no disciplinary process, even if it had, could interfere with civil liberty nor the holding or use of property, in the proper exercise of that liberty continued to use the burying ground upon the same principle and in the same manner as usual. The orthodox party, pretending to exclusive possession of the burial ground, denied the authority of Green street Monthly Meeting to grant orders for interment, and directed the care-taker to refuse them admission.



To avoid the unpleasant necessity of removing the lock from the gate whenever an interment was to take place, Green street Monthly Meeting appointed a committee to make application to the trustees, five of whom gave permission to erect a gate in the western wall of the burying ground as follows:

“We concur in the request made by the committee named in the minute from the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Green street for erecting a gate in the wall of the burial ground on Cherry street, and if necessary to erect a house thereon for a tenant; or to take any other measure that may secure to that meeting the right of interment, in conformity with the deed of trust recognising a common right with the other Monthly Meetings in Philadelphia; it being understood that the Friends of all the other meetings shall enjoy the privilege of entrance equally with Friends of Green street.

WILLIAM YARDLEY, WILLIAM ABBOTT.

BENJAMIN TUCKER, JAMES MARTIN.

GABRIEL MIDDLETON,

*5th mo. 23d, 1828.*”

The object of the erection of this gate was to avoid all collision with the orthodox party, and for the common convenience of all concerned, in the fulfilment of their duties and the enjoyment

of their rights. Whilst the improvement was accomplishing in the most regular and orderly manner, the orthodox party contrived to bring an action against the persons employed in the work for a breach of the peace, in the same way that Friends at their first rise were prosecuted for holding meetings or travelling from place to place.

The joint occupancy of the burial ground by Green street Monthly Meeting, according to the design of the original purchase, was as much a right and as much in the line of their duty, as the occupancy of the meeting-house for religious worship; yet the persons employed by that meeting to erect a gate in the western wall of the burial ground, for the quiet and peaceable accommodation of its members, were sued for a breach of the peace, upon the affirmation of Jeremiah Willets, a member of the Northern District Meeting, who upon examination declined being considered as the prosecutor, but admitted he had been in company at the office of Horace Binney, (one of the attorneys engaged by the party,) with Thomas Wistar, Thomas Stewardson, Thomas P. Cope, Israel Cope and Charles Allen, when, it would seem, a consultation was held on the subject.

Upon the information set forth in the voluntary affirmation of Jeremiah Willets, Joseph Watson,

the mayor, issued a warrant against Joseph Lukens, Edmund Shotwell, Charles Middleton, and two coloured men, employed in the erection of the gate, who appeared before him at his office, on the Fourth of the Sixth month; and although the informant, and those who acted with him on behalf of the prosecution, failed to substantiate the charge of a breach of the peace, the mayor ordered Edmund Shotwell, Joseph Lukens, and Charles Middleton, to enter into their own recognizance, in the sum of five hundred dollars each; and the two coloured men to enter into their own recognizance, each in the sum of twenty dollars, and one surety in the like sum, to keep the peace. As they had not broken the peace, they considered the requisition in the same light that George Fox did when, in answering to the ensnaring Justices of his day, he declared, he was an innocent man, and knew of no law he had broken, and could not make any acknowledgment of guilt by giving surety for good behaviour. The defendants in this case with similar feelings promptly refused compliance, and were all committed by the mayor to the common jail.

This commitment produced considerable sensation amongst Friends and others. It was thought where the evidence failed to sustain the charge the accused ought at least to have gone free, if not have had indemnity awarded for false

accusation. It forcibly called to recollection the procedure of those magistrates in the seventeenth century, who, when they could not convict Friends of the breach of any law, tendered them the oath of allegiance that they might obtain a pretext to send them to prison. The defenders of this measure, ground its justification on a discretionary power, and not upon any rule of law. But if the prevention of a possible collision of the parties, endangering the public peace, was the rule of action, why not bind over the one party as well as the other, seeing they were in possession of equal rights, and equally entitled to the protection and guarantee of law? Why was one party in this cause permitted to recline behind the curtain, whilst the hands of the other was attempted to be tied, in order to bar the occupancy of their joint and equal rights?

The plea of discretionary power is not in accordance with the spirit and institutions of this government, nor indeed with any other laying claim to moral equity. Lord Camden, the first law authority in England, has said that 'discretion is the law of tyrants; in the best men it is caprice, in the worst it is every folly, vice and infirmity, to which human nature is liable.' Legal discretion is not the arbitrary discretion of the judge. It is well defined by Lord Coke. "To discover

through the medium of the law that which is just and proper." "Judges must determine not by the crooked cord of discretion, but by the golden met-wand of the law."

"If the magistrate of any country makes supposed principles and not actions the object of coercion; if upon his own loose constructions and speculations of danger, he commits outrage under pretence of preventing it; if instead of arguing from the consequence to the principle, he inverts every rule of right reason, and infer the consequence from what he thinks proper to *adjudge* the principle, the safety and freedom of human action is at an end. In such a case the magistrate takes upon himself to determine that which is undeterminable; to mark as an object of punishment not a present and actual, but a future, possible, and contingent consequence; and by punishing motives which have not displayed their qualities by their effects, to arrogate to his own limited and short sighted capacity a privilege which belongs only to Eternal Omniscience."

After five days detention in the common jail, the prisoners, Joseph Lukens, Edmund Shotwell, Charles Middleton, and the two coloured men, were brought up by habeas corpus before Judge King, who after a full investigation of the cause of commitment, discharged them.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## CONCLUSION—EMBRACING A CONDENSED SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE.

Having reviewed the declensions and disorders which have marked the progress of the visible church through ages that are past, it is cordial to recur to the purity, simplicity, and efficiency of fundamental christian principle, which, through all the changes of time, remains as immutable and permanent as the attributes of the Divine nature.

Whatever was essential to the subsistence, comfort, and enjoyment of animal life, such as air, light, earth, and water, has been freely furnished for the benefit of all by the bountiful Creator. In like manner whatever means are requisite for the development, proper direction, and lasting enjoyment of intellectual life, are freely and universally dispensed to all mankind. All the human family are originally and essentially the same on the scale of being, and are equally objects of the bounty and gifts of the

Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of men. The principle of saving light and grace is universally adapted to the whole of mankind in every age, and wherever any embrace and obey this principle, it will produce devotional feelings to God, and righteousness and peace to men.

To realize the virtue of spiritual feeling, and the essence of true piety, it is not necessary that all its subjects should adopt the same set of opinions, or the same external mode of worship. The inhabitants of different parts of the globe speak in different languages; they breathe different atmospheres; they are surrounded by different objects and scenery; they cultivate the soil differently, according to the nature of its products; they subsist on different kinds of nourishment, and why may not their devotional feelings be differently manifested, and their religious worship through different forms be acceptable to the Universal Father of man.

Genuine devotion is the offspring of the effusions of the divine spirit in the heart of man, and can only subsist by keeping a communication open with the fountain of Divine goodness which freely flows to all without exception, for their preservation from evil, and for the proper direction of their lives. All real religion consists in true devotion. It is the product of

Divine grace in the heart of man, bringing forth its fruits in practice, and which form the source and stream of christian piety, which flowing from the same source in whatever direction they may diverge, will ultimately unite in increasing the comfort and enjoyment of the human family.

The result of the economy established by Divine wisdom in the operation of fixed and certain principles, will invariably answer the intention designed, in those who co-operate with them. But a deviation from those principles, produces a violation of the law written on the heart, and opens a source of error, and a path of wandering from conscious rectitude, and the peace of innocence. Hence the emphatic declaration, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." When the mind of man turns from the universal principle of spiritual light, goodness, justice, and truth, it must of necessity fall under the influence and direction of that selfish spirit which is produced and supported by mere animal sensation. The unwise exercise of that liberty, which is a concomitant of the rational nature, and the improper direction and action of the human



mind open an entrance to those evils which prove "the fell destroyer" of individual comfort, and of public prosperity and happiness.

The prevalence and activity of a selfish spirit, comprising the wisdom which arises from an experimental knowledge of visible objects, laid the foundation and have maintained the superstructure of that political oppression and religious intolerance, which, in past ages, turned the abodes of men into an Aceldama, or field of blood. The avarice of the selfish spirit of man hath monopolized whatever is tangible in the visible world, although he is only a passenger through time in common with multitudes of generations all equally entitled to the bounties of the common Creator. As it is not in the nature of visible objects to satisfy the principle of progressive intelligence in the mind of man, the interests of religion have also been laid hold upon and monopolized, and in a variety of ways subjected to a systematic organization of sale and barter, that particular classes of men might be raised to an official importance in society, and claim the enjoyments of polished life at the expense of others.

The interference of civil power between the soul of man and his Creator has stained the annals of every country with the most painful

results. This interference, at an early period of human society, opened a source of complicated calamity to mankind, under which most of the nations of the earth still groan. By the illuminating influence and progress of truth, this dictatorial and presumptuous spirit has lost much of its power; and ultimately all legislation on the religious rights of man, will appear as a daring impiety, and as a sacrilegious attempt to invade the Divine sovereignty.

Religious intolerance and persecution, in all their pretensions and modifications, rest exclusively on the selfish principle, which in every age has been the true ground of assumed orthodoxy in all those who have sought to enforce their views, and subject others to their unconditional control. The love of interest and power brings into action all the energies of the selfish principle, which darkens the understanding and hardens the heart of man, often impelling him to the commission of injustice and oppression to attain the realization of selfish gratification. The selfish principle, in its progress and activity, uniformly assumes a specious appearance, either of zeal for the public welfare, or for the promotion of superior piety, under the guise of some sectarian dogma. But the real cause of all intolerance and unjust domination is the

wrong direction of the human mind, by which it separates itself from the light and feeling of truth. It is not so much the embracing particular dogmas that leads men to persecute, as the temperament of mind upon which these dogmas are engrafted. Persecution is a consequence of the aberration of our common nature from that standard of immutable truth placed in every heart, for the rule of its actions. In violating the law of justice in regard to others, we trample over it in ourselves. The oppressed may be innocent, but the oppressor must be guilty. What responsibility is incurred, in attempting to coerce others in matters, respecting which their independence is equal to our own!

The society of Friends in its first rise, bore ample and efficient testimony to those religious rights, and that christian liberty, which rest on the basis of immutable truth; and it is cause of deep regret that in the present day those rights and this liberty should have been invaded by any portion of the society in regard to their fellow professors. The attempt by a few individuals, to monopolize the disciplinary power of the society, and to give it a direction for promoting their own purposes, without regard to the equal rights of their brethren, is an incontrovertible fact which cannot be removed from the history

of recent transactions within the limits of the Yearly Meeting held in Philadelphia.

Without particularizing the extraordinary proceedings against Elias Hicks, or dwelling on those overbearing measures frequently imposed upon Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, it may be asked, what else but a monopoly of power, by a few over the many, were the transactions at the time of holding the Yearly Meeting in the Fourth month, 1827, when the representatives were interrupted in their duty of nominating a clerk, and an individual placed in that character contrary to the feelings and desire of the body of the meeting? What else but a monopoly of power was the nomination of the self-constituted committee in that meeting, to go down to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, to over-awe or constrain them to act conformably to the mandates of assumed orthodoxy? Let the result answer these questions. This committee, embracing the principal leaders in the orthodox party, was rejected by nearly all the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, as having no official power; and those meetings, in consequence of the orthodox party interrupting the regular order of the society, generally agreed to re-organize the Yearly Meeting, on original principles and according to former practice.

The attempt of the orthodox party to enforce their exclusive views, in the different meetings for discipline wherever they could influence or control the clerk, was the immediate cause of producing the re-organization of the Yearly Meeting. How far the reception of any new religious opinions by the orthodox members operated on their minds to induce them to set up a claim to be exclusively the society, in the midst of their brethren of equal right and unimpeachable practice, is best known to themselves.— Friends have not called in question the right of private opinion. Whatever the peculiar views of the orthodox brethren may be on particular doctrinal subjects, no exception has been taken against them on this account. The point at issue was, the assumption and exercise of undue power. Controverted opinions have been left by Friends to stand or fall by their own merit. Nothing new has been adopted by them. They adhere with unshaken confidence to the fundamental principles of the society; and endeavour, through the renewings of Divine assistance, to maintain its testimonies and practice.

In avoiding collision with the orthodox party in meetings for discipline, which formerly were so painful, and conducted so inconsistently with the character of religious men, Friends have

been governed by the peaceable principle of truth, and have not detracted from any right of the orthodox members. These members have been left to their own choice, as far as respects themselves, and are only precluded, by the reorganization of the Yearly Meeting, from overruling and imposing on their brethren. The charge of unsoundness against Friends, so perseveringly persisted in by the orthodox leaders, is without any real foundation; for the Yearly Meeting in its public character has made no declaration whatever on controverted doctrinal points, and it is believed that the generality of the members are averse to controversial speculations. The true cause of this charge had its origin in the disappointment of those individuals, who have attempted, in an unprecedented manner, to impose their opinions and views on the society. As Friends maintained their rights and privileges with becoming respect and firmness, the orthodox brethren to cover their own arbitrary proceedings and to sustain their unreasonable and unwarrantable pretensions to be exclusively the society, so as to entitle them to its reputation and property, boldly preferred, in the fervour of their active zeal, a charge of unsoundness against the principal part of this Yearly Meeting. Disinterested observers must review

with astonishment the extraordinary pretensions of individuals, who by a course of their own proceedings separated themselves from the unity of the general body of the Yearly Meeting and then claimed all the soundness, power, right, and property belonging to it! Who does not see that such pretensions must prove as futile, as they are novel and inconsistent with every principle of religious and civil society?

It is not believed that the generality of those remaining with the orthodox party approve of those intolerant measures which have caused such painful disorders and divisions, or that they are disposed to deprive Friends of their just right and interest in the property belonging to the society. Various causes contribute to shut up the way of well disposed individuals, and retain them in bondage, so as to diminish their usefulness and comfort, and place all their weight in that scale which tends to prolong existing difficulties, and the trials of Friends. In the midst of those trials to which Friends have been and still are subjected by the overbearing pretensions of individuals, having no paramount right or power over other members of the society, it is cause of thankfulness that the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Philadelphia have been preserved in that moderation, consistency, and

charity towards their opposers which become their profession. Friends in a near sympathy with each other under sufferings from the reproaches, accusations and injustice of those who were formerly brethren, have been enabled to commit their cause to Him who judgeth righteously, and who sees the ruling motive and integrity of every heart, and can ultimately overrule these events for the spread and establishment of truth in the mind of man.

FINIS.



#### ERRATA.

- Page 32, line 3 from top, for ' judgment of the individuals,' read  
' judgment of individuals.'
- " 58, line 16 from top, for ' dispersed in Judea,' read ' dis-  
persed of Judah.'
- " 74, line 9 from top, for ' the several,' read ' them several-  
ly.'
- " 75, line 2 from bottom, for ' Thomas Turner,' read  
' Joseph Turner.'
- " 79, line 6 from top, for ' Walter Mifflin,' read ' Warner  
Mifflin.'
- " do. do. for ' John Cogwill,' read ' John Cow-  
gill.'
- " 88, lines 4 & 5 from top, for ' in Delaware,' read ' in the  
state of Delaware.'
- " 98, line 16 from top, for ' 1st mo. 1827,' read ' 12th mo.  
1826.'
- " 104, line 6 from top, for ' (page ,)' in some copies, read  
' (page 33.)'







